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# **Sociocultural Impacts of English and Globalisation on Women in Higher Education in Saudi Arabia**

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Centre for Research in Education and Educational  
Technology

**Doctorate in Education**

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## Abstract

There is increasing focus on the dominance of English undermining different cultures (Bray, 1993; Canagarajah, 1999; Kubota, 2002a, 2002b; Block and Cameron, 2002; Phillipson, 2009; Altbach, 2013; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014; Piller, 2017). In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), westernisation through teaching English is problematised (Elyas and Picard, 2010; Badry and Willoughby, 2015; Barnawi, 2015; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Abouammoh, 2018). In Higher Education (HE) in KSA, internationalisation strategies are countered by a protectionist stance over Islamic and cultural roots. This stance is especially evident in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL), leading to high levels of 'cultural sensitivity' censorship in the Saudi classroom. There is an ongoing debate about cultural sensitivity and whether English is perceived as a 'threat' in the Gulf Arab Muslim EFL context (Gobert, 2015; Aljohani, 2016; El-Sakran, 2017). Located in Riyadh, at a time of strict restrictions on women, this qualitative study expands on research on the 'hidden population' (Al-Kahtani et al. 2005, p.229) within female-only Saudi Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). Using semi-structured interviews and a narrative inquiry methodology (Bell, 2002; Labov, 2003; Cortazzi, 2014), it pioneers intercultural investigation into an insider-perspective of 21 women: 8 non-Muslim western women EFL teachers and 13 Saudi women EFL learners. More specifically, it examines sociocultural changes in learning/ teaching English: learner motivation, acculturation (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005) and teacher demotivation (Kumazawa, 2013). Findings reveal that English is perceived more positively and used more diversely than studies hitherto claim. Metaphors such as 'a weapon', 'a key' and 'an adapter' add new gender-related concepts to investment theory (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Findings explore themes of 'likeness' and 'integration', 'othering' of women, which contribute to the understanding of the low retention of foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs (Badry and Willoughby, 2015).

**Keywords:**

English in higher education; globalisation; learner motivation; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA); linguistic imperialism; narrative inquiry; othering; westernisation; women in higher education



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I dedicate this effort to Roberto Pierdomenico and my four-year old son, Aaron.

# Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES .....	VII
LIST OF TABLES.....	VIII
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	IX
1.1 Rationale .....	1
1.2 Key terms in this study .....	2
1.2.1 Defining 'women in HE' in this study .....	2
1.2.2 Defining 'sociocultural' in this study.....	2
1.2.3 Defining 'intercultural' in this study .....	3
1.2.4 Defining 'westerner' in this study.....	3
1.3 Research Context .....	4
1.3.1 Overview of cultural differences.....	4
1.3.2 Location of the study.....	6
1.3.3 The context for Saudi women learners .....	8
1.4 Statement of the research issues.....	11
1.4.1 The importance of English in KSA .....	11
1.4.2 English teaching pedagogy in KSA.....	12
1.4.3 Cultural sensitivity in Saudi EFL practice.....	13
1.4.4 Globalisation in KSA .....	15
1.4.5 The 'threat' of English .....	18
1.4.6 Culture shock and teacher turnover.....	19
1.5 Significance of the study .....	21
1.6 Research aims .....	22
1.7 Research questions .....	23
1.8 Chapter summary .....	23
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	24
2.1 Culture .....	24
2.1.1 Defining 'culture' in theory.....	24
2.1.2 Defining 'culture' in this study.....	27
2.1.3 Critical appraisal of selected studies .....	31
2.2 Impacts of globalisation .....	31
2.2.1 Definitions of 'globalisation' .....	31
2.2.2 Cultural globalisation .....	32
2.2.3 Tangible impacts of globalisation .....	34
2.2.4 Intangible impacts of globalisation .....	36
2.2.5 Intercultural competence .....	41
2.2.6 Power relations in Saudi EFL practice .....	42
2.3 Defining 'English' in the Saudi context.....	45

2.3.1 'English' in Saudi HE.....	45
2.3.2 'EFL' in Saudi HE.....	47
2.3.3 'English' as a Lingua Franca .....	47
2.4 Learner motivation.....	48
2.4.1 Possible Selves Theory.....	48
2.4.2 Impact of globalisation on L2 learner motivation.....	51
2.5 Teacher motivation .....	53
2.5.1 Teacher motivation.....	53
2.5.2 Demotivation in teaching .....	56
2.6 Chapter Summary .....	57
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>58</b>
3.1 Research methodology.....	58
3.1.1 Justification of research methods.....	58
3.1.2 Narrative inquiry approach .....	59
3.1.3 'Narrative' in this study.....	60
3.1.4 Narrative frame in this study .....	62
3.1.4.1 Narrative frame for teacher cohort 1 .....	62
3.2 Ethical considerations .....	68
3.2.1 Participant recruitment challenges .....	68
3.2.2 Risks to western women EFL teachers.....	68
3.2.3 Risks to Saudi women EFL learners .....	69
3.2.4 Risks to the researcher .....	69
3.2.5 Language used for data collection.....	69
3.2.6 Funding and conflict of interests .....	69
3.3 Reflexivity .....	70
3.3.1 Researcher reflexivity overview .....	70
3.3.2 Critique of research methods in this study .....	70
3.4 Chapter summary.....	72
<b>CHAPTER 4 DATA COLLECTION .....</b>	<b>73</b>
4.1 Research Process .....	73
4.2 Timeframe for the research .....	74
4.3 Western women EFL teacher cohort 1 .....	74
4.3.1 Recruitment process of teacher cohort 1 .....	74
4.3.2 Profile criteria of teacher cohort 1.....	75
4.4 Saudi women EFL learner cohorts 2a + 2b .....	77
4.4.1 Recruitment process: learners .....	77
4.4.2 Profile criteria: learners .....	77
4.4.3 Participant profile: learners .....	78
4.5 Data collection process .....	79

4.5.1 Initial study.....	79
4.5.2 Main study.....	79
4.5.3 Extra data .....	80
4.5.4 Treatment of data.....	80
4.5.5 Transcription conventions .....	80
4.6 Quantity of data .....	81
4.6.1 Quantity of narrative data.....	81
4.6.2 Quantity of interview data .....	81
4.7 Chapter summary .....	82
<b>CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS.....</b>	<b>83</b>
5.1 Data analysis in qualitative research .....	83
5.1.1 Thematic network analysis .....	83
5.1.2 Thematic analysis framework .....	85
5.2 Data analysis of Teacher Cohort 1 .....	86
5.2.1 Thematic analysis of data .....	89
5.3 Data analysis of learner cohorts .....	91
5.3.1 Coding the material: Cohort 2a interviews.....	91
5.3.2 Identifying themes .....	92
5.3.3 Coding the material: Cohort 2b narratives.....	92
5.3.4 Identifying themes: Cohort 2b narratives .....	94
5.3.5 Critique of coding and thematic analysis .....	95
5.4 Chapter summary .....	96
<b>CHAPTER 6 EMERGING THEMES .....</b>	<b>97</b>
6.1 Teacher Cohort 1: Emerging themes .....	97
6.1.1 Emerging theme: isolation .....	98
6.1.1.1 Social isolation .....	101
6.1.1.2 Classroom isolation .....	103
6.1.1.3 Institutional isolation.....	107
6.1.1.4 Total isolation .....	108
6.1.2 Emerging theme: Integration .....	110
6.1.3 Emerging theme: Othering.....	113
6.1.4 Emerging theme: Likeness .....	116
6.2 Learner Cohort 2a+b: Emerging themes .....	120
6.2.1 Emerging theme: Empowerment.....	121
6.2.2 Emerging theme: Linguistic imperialism .....	125
6.2.3 Emerging theme: Transformation.....	131
6.2.4 Emerging theme: Exclusion.....	133
6.2.5 Emerging theme: Likeness .....	135
6.2.6 Emerging theme: Othering.....	137

6.2.7 Acculturation: recommendations.....	140
6.3 Chapter Summary .....	140
<b>CHAPTER 7 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>142</b>
7.1 Discussion of findings: Western women EFL teachers .....	142
7.1.1 Findings for RQ1 .....	142
7.1.2 Findings for RQ2 .....	145
7.1.3 Findings for RQ3 .....	147
7.1.4 Findings for RQ4 .....	149
7.2 Discussion of findings: Saudi women EFL learners .....	152
7.2.1 Findings for RQ5 .....	152
7.2.2 Findings for RQ6 .....	155
7.2.3 Findings for RQ7 .....	157
7.3 Recommendations for HEI policy in KSA.....	159
7.3.1 Recommendations: the western women EFL teacher cohort.....	159
7.3.2 Recommendations: The Saudi women EFL learner cohorts .....	162
7.4 Implications for EFL practice .....	164
7.4.1 Implications for teaching .....	164
7.4.2 Implications for L2 learning experience .....	167
7.5 Limitations.....	168
7.5.1 Generalisability.....	168
7.5.2 Snowball sampling.....	169
7.5.3 Recruitment challenges .....	169
7.5.4 Reliability .....	169
7.5.5 Language-based interference.....	169
7.5.5.1 Transcription and coding methods.....	170
7.5.6 Generational difference.....	171
7.5.7 Cultural interference in researcher reflexivity.....	171
7.6 Further research .....	171
7.7 Contribution to knowledge .....	172
7.8 Chapter summary.....	173
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>191</b>
Appendix 1 – Example of EFL Job Offer in KSA (2013) .....	191
Appendix 2 – Embassy Declaration Form for foreign workers in KSA (2013) .....	192
Appendix 3 – Saudi HEI Handbook.....	193
Appendix 4 – Saudi HEI Teacher Etiquette Form .....	199
Appendix 5 – Saudi HEI Teacher Agreement Form.....	200
Appendix 6 – Informed consent for Cohort 1 .....	201
Appendix 7 – Informed consent for Cohort 2a+b .....	203

Appendix 8 – Ethical Clearance Letter 1 .....	205
Appendix 9 – Ethical Clearance Letter 2 .....	206
Appendix 10 – Interview Frame for Cohort 2a .....	207
Appendix 11 –Cohort 1: Thematic Analysis Framework .....	208
Appendix 12 –Cohort 2a Thematic Analysis Framework .....	212
Appendix 13 – Cohort 2b: Thematic Analysis Framework .....	213
Appendix 14 – Cohorts 2a + b: Global themes .....	215
Appendix 15 – Cohort 1: Excerpt of data analysis .....	217
Appendix 16 –Cohort 1: Narrative Frame .....	223
Appendix 17 –Cohort 2a: Interview Frame .....	227
Appendix 18 –Cohort 2b: Narrative Frame Complete .....	237

## List of figures

Figure 1 Religious composition of KSA .....	5
Figure 2 Location of the study.....	7
Figure 3 Population based on region .....	7
Figure 4 The 'Orientation Document' .....	14
Figure 5 Timeline of the expansion and censorship of telecommunications in KSA .....	16
Figure 6 Gender-segregation signage.....	17
Figure 7 Modernist and Post-modernist definitions of 'culture'.....	25
Figure 8 Defining culture in this study .....	28
Figure 9 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'pre-service' stage .....	63
Figure 10 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'in-service' stage.....	64
Figure 11 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'post-service' stage.....	65
Figure 12 Cohort 2b narrative frame excerpt: 'Before' learning English .....	65
Figure 13 Cohort 2b narrative frame excerpt: 'during' stage.....	66
Figure 14 Cohort 2b narrative frame: 'after' learning English in a Saudi HEI .....	67
Figure 15 Excerpt of interview: Cohort 2a .....	67
Figure 16 Flow chart: Chronology of the research process .....	73
Figure 17 Profile criteria: Western women EFL teachers .....	75
Figure 18 Profile criteria: Saudi women EFL learners .....	77
Figure 19 Example of thematic analysis network .....	85
Figure 20 Thematic network (a) Cohort 1.....	88
Figure 21 Thematic network (b) for cohort 1 .....	89
Figure 22 Thematic network I for Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2a + b .....	94
Figure 23 Impact of globalisation Saudi women EFL learners cohort 2a + b .....	95
Figure 24 Diagram of the findings for cohort 1 .....	100
Figure 25 Recommendations for women in Higher Education in KSA .....	160

## List of tables

Table 1 Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System.....	49
Table 2 Dörnyei's L2 additional motivational dimensions .....	51
Table 3 Possible Selves framework reconceptualised for EFL teacher motivation .....	55
Table 4 Overview of Study.....	59
Table 5 Gantt chart of research activities.....	74
Table 6 Profile of cohort 1 .....	76
Table 7 Profile of cohort 2a: Interviews.....	78
Table 8 Profile of cohort 2b: Narratives .....	78
Table 9 Total amount of data generated for the study.....	81
Table 10 Thematic analysis framework.....	84
Table 11 Thematic analysis table: From codes to themes .....	87
Table 12 Thematic analysis coding excerpt .....	91
Table 13 Thematic analysis codes of cohort 2a: Interviews .....	92
Table 14 Thematic analysis codes of cohort 2b.....	93
Table 15 Global themes for Saudi women EFL learner cohorts 2a+b .....	94
Table 16 Turnover of western women EFL teachers in this study .....	110

# List of Acronyms

CEFR	Common European Framework Reference
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EVP	English for Vocational/Occupational Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HE	Higher Education
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
HREC	Human Rights Ethics Committee
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
LF	Lingua Franca
L2	Second Language
MMOG(s)	Mass Multiplayer Online Game(s)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NS	Native Speakers
NNS	Non-Native Speakers
PYP	Preliminary Year Programme
SLA	Second Language Acquisition





# Chapter 1 Introduction

This doctoral thesis focuses on the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in the Arabic speaking country of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hereafter referred to as KSA). The EFL environment of this study is unique compared to other teaching settings worldwide because of the extent of influence that social restrictions and cultural norms have on teachers and learners as women. The sociocultural background presented in this chapter is, therefore, indispensable to understanding the significance of this study. In this introductory chapter, I shall focus on the various aspects influencing the lives of women in the settings of gender-segregated Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in KSA.

I begin this chapter by explaining my rationale, defining key terms and then I describe the research context. I describe the Saudi cultural landscape (geographical, demographic, socio-political). Further, the micro research settings are explored – the Saudi HEIs; I describe the location of the study, then I review Higher Education (HE) for Saudi women and western teachers as a background for the participants of the study. After this, I state the problem and significance of the study. I conclude with the research aims and research questions.

## 1.1 Rationale

The study was inspired by my journey as a non-Muslim woman (British, Zimbabwean) relocating from Europe to KSA, without any cultural experience in the Middle East. My experience of working as a western woman EFL teacher in a Saudi HEI for four years informed my research design.

Therefore, the study was formulated from an epistemological standpoint through the process of applying for a job in a Saudi HEI, relocating to KSA, experiencing Saudi culture as a foreigner and adapting to the context. Before I relocated to KSA, I experienced how the cultural reality of KSA was negatively depicted abroad. There was little scholarly research on westerners working in the Gulf Arab Muslim EFL context. Instead, many different mediums (websites, blogs, and books) reflected ethnocentric rhetoric that I experienced first-hand. As a reflective-practitioner, observations of EFL practice were noted during that time. The rationale was influenced by my interest in learner motivation and how English is perceived in the context. I wanted to understand what obtaining English fluency means for Saudi women within their society. An aspiration to investigate this context through qualitative research developed.

Given the lack of academic sources available to describe the setting for non-Muslim teachers in a conservative Islamic setting, I include experienced-based information and the HEI documentation that was distributed to fellow western teachers at the time of this study. This official documentation is included to show how Saudi HEIs culturally equip non-Muslim western women EFL teachers recruited for this context.

Upon securing a job offer at a gender-segregated female Saudi HEI, (see Appendix 1), a western woman EFL teacher signs an Embassy Declaration form to abide by Shari'ah laws (see Appendix 2). She declares awareness of the Shari'ah laws that govern KSA and gives consent to the authorities to exercise the customary judicial proceedings (Clause 1, 2 and 3). This document refers to the death penalty, which by law can be applied to non-Saudi nationals residing in KSA.

Prior to relocating, she may be sent some information by the recruitment agency to help her with some cultural guidelines for her new teaching job. I include the Saudi HEI handbook I received, which was distributed in 2013. It was intended to help western women, like myself, adapt to the sociocultural context prior to relocating (see Appendix 3). The abridged Saudi HEI handbook in my appendix includes only relevant sections which I found particularly informative to contextualise my research, and these will be referred to in later sections.

On arrival, along with other western women working in Saudi HEIs, the newly recruited teacher is given the Teacher Etiquette Form (see Appendix 4). Then, once she officially starts teaching, she signs the Teacher Agreement Form. This form declares her consent to additional expectations in teaching practice (see Appendix 5).

My rationale was influenced by the sociocultural impact these expectations and restrictions may have on living, working and teaching in this strictly Muslim context, which is unreported in broader EFL circles. The Gulf Arab Muslim EFL context inspired me to conduct a qualitative inquiry into the sociocultural impacts, with a particular interest in culture and gender-related issues for women in Saudi HEIs.

## **1.2 Key terms in this study**

My thesis explores the sociocultural impacts of English and globalisation on women in HE in KSA. It is evident that early on I need to define these key terms to facilitate accuracy and fluidity in later discussions.

### ***1.2.1 Defining 'women in HE' in this study***

My study investigates only women due to gender-segregation in HEIs (see Section 1.3.3.5). For the sake of avoiding excessive repetition of the key terms, I simplify the terms: 'western women EFL teachers' and 'Saudi women EFL learners'. The term 'teacher(s)' in my study only applies to western women who are working as EFL teachers in Saudi HEIs, whereas, the term 'learner(s)' only applies to Saudi women who are EFL learners in Saudi HEIs. I also use the terms 'Foreign Language (FL) teachers' and 'L2 learners' within much broader theoretical debates in Second Language Acquisition (SLA); these later terms are not gender-specific.

### ***1.2.2 Defining 'sociocultural' in this study***

In this study, 'sociocultural' is defined as the fusion of the social (referring to the unique religious, political and social factors in KSA) and cultural (indicating the

influence of its historical, tribal origins) elements. These two dimensions that together constitute the Saudi identity are defined strictly within the parameters of my thesis to explore the sociocultural impacts that English and globalisation have on women in HE.

### **1.2.3 Defining ‘intercultural’ in this study**

In my research, ‘intercultural’ refers to the merging of the two distinct cultural groupings – Saudi with non-Saudi, East with West, secular with the non-secular – within the unique teaching context in Saudi HEIs. ‘Inter’ indicates two cultural groupings rather than international or cosmopolitan, which refers, more extensively, to multiple cultures and polylingual settings.

### **1.2.4 Defining ‘westerner’ in this study**

My study qualitatively explores the perspectives of teachers who are referred to as ‘westerners’ throughout the study. The use of this term requires justification because, from an academic perspective, it seems like a somewhat reductionist categorisation (May, 1999). The reason for using the term ‘westerner’ is that it is used in the vernacular in this specific teaching context. Foreigners who are EFL teachers are uniformly referred to as ‘westerners’ in their workplace by their Saudi HR managers or Saudi colleagues and by Saudi citizens in their private lives outside work.

From a theoretical perspective, this word raises the old connotations of what it used to mean, especially in the socio-historic context of the Middle East. It typically referred to ‘the occident natives or inhabitants of Europe or North America’, as cited in the Oxford Dictionary. Thus, it is somewhat inaccurate when applied to the Saudi EFL job market, which lures multinational staff from diverse cultures, well beyond America and Europe. In this context a ‘westerner’ represents both native speaker EFL teachers (NS) from developed countries (e.g. the USA and the UK) and non-native EFL teachers (NNS) from developing countries (e.g. South Africa) alike. The non-Saudi participants in this study share one language, but they do not share one homogenous culture of the West as it implies. Instead, while all of these cultures are indistinctly classified in the teaching context, the westerners in this study represent the inner circle (UK, USA, Canada, and New Zealand) of Kachru’s concentric circles of global Englishes (Kachru, 1986; 1992).

Similar to the term ‘westerner’ in this context, the official identification on an *iqama* (a work permit ID card) makes reductionist distinctions between cultures. For example, the *iqama* labels, such as ‘Saudi’ or ‘non-Saudi’ (all other foreign nationals) and ‘Muslim’ or ‘non-Muslim’ (all other religions). These reductionist labels have been incorporated in everyday vernacular, creating norms in identifying cultural identity in this way (see Section 2.1.1). Therefore, the cultural and ethnic distinctions between ‘Arab’ and ‘non-Arab’ are equally accentuated. Class divisions appear quite blatantly along the lines of ‘passport power’ (Cole, 2018). ‘Passport power’ is the practice of discriminating between foreign professionals based on nationality, i.e. awarding higher status to desirable nationalities of NS teachers from developed countries versus attributing lower

status to NNS teachers from developing countries. This distinction can be based along the lines of ethnicity and skill level of the foreign immigrants in various sectors in KSA (Cole, 2018). Therefore, the term is problematised. The label of 'westerner' is primarily used for practical reasons: to quickly distinguish foreign staff as non-Saudi nationals and as culturally different, i.e. to distinguish Arab from non-Arab. However, the label 'westerner' can be used to imply 'secular' or 'non-Muslim' although many teachers are non-Saudis but Muslims. As religious identity is a sensitive issue in the research setting, this label is used to possibly indicate differences not only in ethnic origin but in worldviews, values and even moral behaviour. This aspect of passport power provides preliminary information to contextualise the discussion of problematising culture in chapter 2 (see Section 2.1).

## **1.3 Research Context**

In this section, I will describe the research context beginning with an overview of the cultural differences. I will also provide visual information, locate the study and explain the context for women. I avoid the intrusive repetition of 'the Gulf Arab Muslim EFL context' by referring to 'my research context' or 'the Saudi context' and specifying 'Gulf Arab context' in discussions beyond the Saudi context.

### **1.3.1 Overview of cultural differences**

As a western researcher in the Saudi context, I am considered 'an outsider' to the culture yet 'an insider' as a western teacher in Saudi HEIs. As my study is primarily based on 'Saudi' identity, I define the cultural differences within KSA.

In exploring the sociocultural landscape, from the beginnings in terms of the nomadic settlements in the Arabian Peninsula and its fusion of *Bedu* (Bedouin tradition and customs) influences to the present globalised KSA today, defining the Saudi cultural identity is evidently complex. Therefore, I endeavour to summarise the main differences briefly. Because the Saudi identity is, above all, religious, it dominates the somewhat softer nuances of its Bedu origins. Any such cultural differences between regions are mostly hidden by the homogeneity of Islam and Arabism (Cole, 2018). Without considering the subtler socio-political and historic influences, my study would seem culturally essentialist. As Holliday (2018) explains in his works on 'Negotiating a Culture of Grammar', it is easy to prescribe 'one culture' of perceived isolated communities from a position of exotic idealisation' (p.3). For brevity, however, I selected three of the myriad factors that can be included in this introductory chapter.

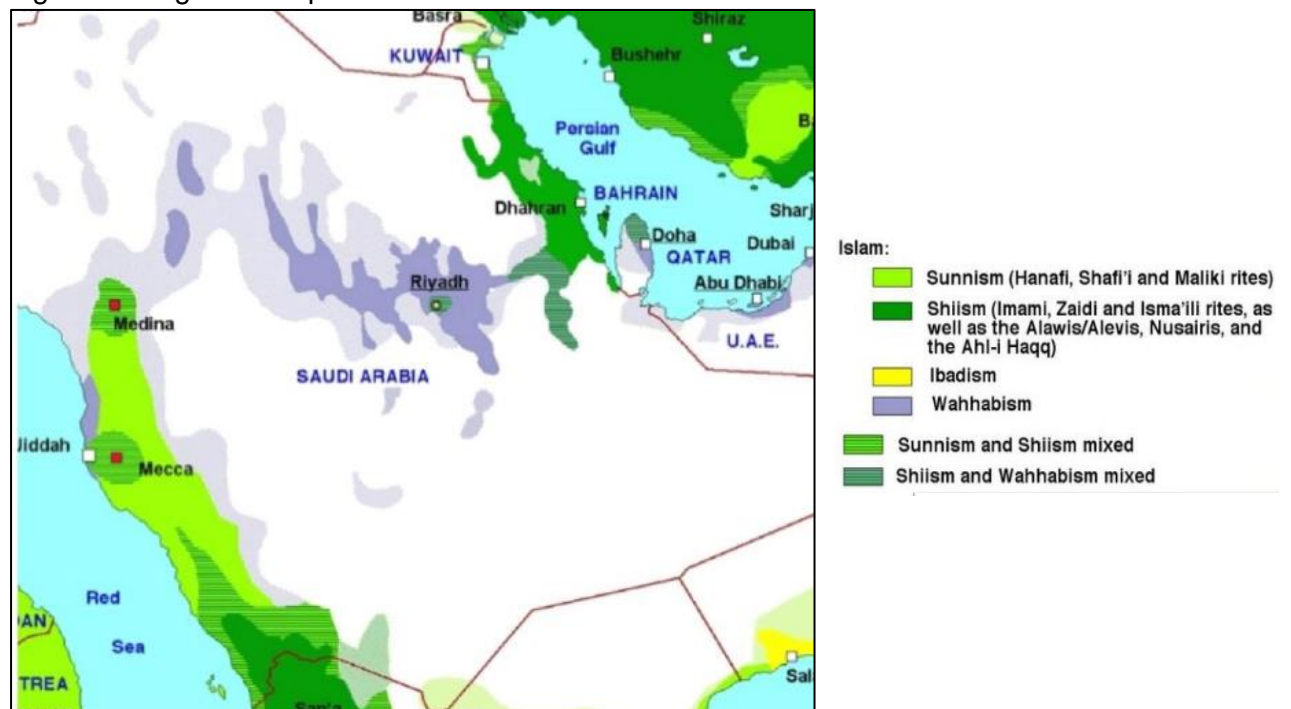
First, the cultural differences between Saudis are influenced by a key factor – *asl* (the concept of origin), which socially defines Saudis within their demographic grouping (Cole, 2018). For example, Saudis in Hijaz are known as *Ashraf* (the recognised descendants of the prophet). At the same time, in other regional areas, such as Riyadh, Saudis claim patrilineal descent from eponymous ancestors of ancient Arab tribes, and then others have no tribal connections at all (Cole, 2018). 'Considerations of origin are important markers and influence social

interaction, including marriage, but do not translate directly into economic or power differentials in the national society' (Cole, 2018, paras. 30–31).

Second, Saudi citizens are officially declared to be Muslim; 'the country is officially 100% Muslim' (Saudi Arabia Population, 2017). As Muslims, there is a strong identification bound by the concept of *ummah* (Islamic nation), in which 'issues of race, ethnicity, and national origin should be of no significance' (Cole, 2018, paras. 30–31). However, KSA preserves its religious heritage, being the 'Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques' (Masjid-e-Nabwi Mosque in Medina and Masjid-al-Haram Mosque in Mecca). Because of this religious status, KSA has considerable religious and political influence throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world. Being Saudi and Muslim is intertwined into a nationalistic and religious identity (see Appendix 3, *Saudi Arabia's constitution*, p. 174; *Religion*, p. 174).

Third, while KSA is officially Muslim, it is also asserted that Sunni Islam is officially considered the only religion of the kingdom as opposed to the Shia Islamic faith found in neighbouring countries, Yemen and Iran. The Saudi religious identity may appear homogenous, being Muslims within a strict Sunni Islamic kingdom governed by Shari'ah laws and ruled by the absolute monarchy of Al-Saud. However, the socio-political composition within the Saudi population makes defining the cultural and religious differences challenging and well beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the religious composition of KSA is represented visually below. Figure 1 is adapted from Izady's map (2008), which initially showed the religious composition of the entire Middle East, but for the purpose of my study, it only represents KSA.

Figure 1 Religious composition of KSA



Noticeably, *Wahhabism* (strict orthodox teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahhab (1703–92) heavily dominates the central and surrounding areas of Riyadh, but Figure 1 shows that there is a mixed religious composition of both Wahhabis and Shia Muslims in the capital. At the time of my study, Wahhabism was central to the governance of KSA and adherence to the Wahhabi doctrine distinguished KSA from most other Muslim societies. Consequently, it has been considered one of the strictest Muslim nations (Bowen, 2014) because of its Shari’ah (Islamic law). Shari’ah derived from Islamic fundamentals and how it provides religious regulation of morality and judicial authority in KSA, with its moral framework, has been described in detail (Ahmed, 1998, cited in Metcalfe, 2008, p. 98). Here, I draw reference to religion only to contextualise the present study within the framework of Shari’ah laws that affect women in HE in KSA (Appendix 2), and further discussion on religious aspects are outside the scope of this thesis.

At the time of the present study, the *Muttawa* (religious police) enforced Shari’ah on Saudis, non-Saudis, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Therefore the women in this study had to abide in strict accordance with its governance. This study was conducted before the reforms of the 2030 Vision were introduced. At that time, Shari’ah law restricted certain activities in daily life for women (see Appendix 3, *Muttawa*, p.175; *The Saudi way of life*, p. 176; *Restrictions on women in public places* p.176; *Sexual immorality* p. 176; *What to wear*, p. 176; *Clothes shopping*, p. 177; *Travelling as women*, p. 177; *Driving and Taxis*, p. 177). Therefore, Wahhabism is central to this study, as is gender-segregation (see Section 1.3.3.5).

I briefly outlined only three main aspects to consider when describing the cultural differences in KSA. In so doing, I evidence how challenging it is to define ‘cultural difference’ in the Saudi context, not only because of the pertinent aspects, such as *asl*, *ummah* but also because of the socio-political and historical influences on the present indigenous Saudi population.

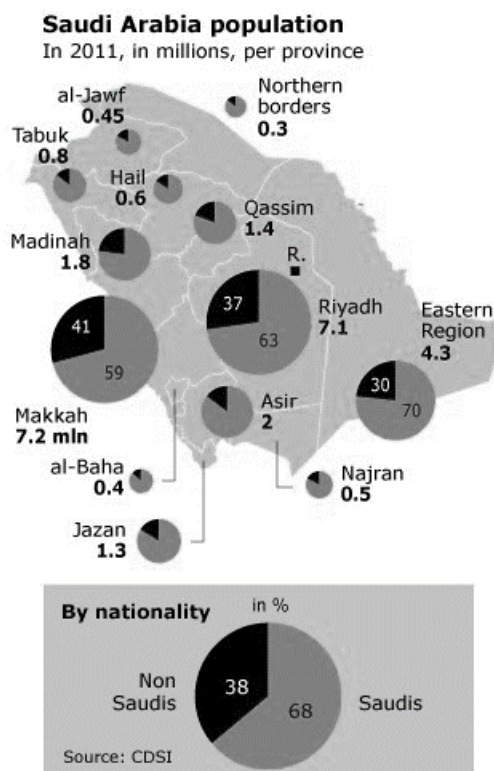
### **1.3.2 Location of the study**

My study was located in Riyadh because it hosts a large percentage of the foreign workforce, and it was the city where I was based during the time of the study. Riyadh, being established as the capital city in 1932, witnessed rapid urbanisation due to the discovery of ‘black gold’ (oil) in 1938, creating an intercultural hub in less than four decades. The once insular Bedouin society has rapidly transformed into a globalised hub of cross-cultural diversity. In the 1950s, the population of the capital was a little over 110, 000, while it is now estimated at 6,704,000 (Saudi Arabia Population, 2017). The map in Figure 2, was adapted from Saudi HEI Handbook’s cover (Appendix 3).

Figure 2 Location of the study



Figure 3 Population based on region



The infographic (Fanack, 2018), in Figure 3, shows almost the entire population of KSA is settled in three locations: Riyadh, the Eastern Region and the western coastal area, comprised of Jeddah and Mecca. The expansion of multinational companies and commercial enterprises throughout the country has exposed KSA



to a dominant immigrant workforce since the 1970s. It presents a binary distinction between Saudi and non-Saudi cultural identity, indicating the most prominent cultural division within Saudi society as seen between citizens and immigrants (Cole, 2018). This infographic shows the demographic statistics as of 2011. According to the latest revision of the United Nations World Urbanisation Prospects, the number of non-Saudi expatriates working in the country has risen to approximately 9 million (Saudi Arabia Population, 2017). With the expansion of education for women in HE came the increase in women westerners. However, detailed statistics on this sector at the time of the study were difficult to obtain.

When I conducted my research in Riyadh, KSA was closed off to recreational tourism. Riyadh strictly controlled entry points to the capital and the foreign workforce only accessed it with an *Iqama* ID. Its immigration policies were aimed at protecting KSA from unwanted illegal immigration, but it also left Riyadh relatively isolated as only foreigners on work visas were permitted access to the capital until recently. While the region of KSA is arguably becoming increasingly more cosmopolitan and globalised, in certain enclaves, such as female-only HEIs on female campuses in gender-segregated HEIs, the lines of intercultural contrasts are still clearly evident and all the more striking.

### **1.3.3 The context for Saudi women learners**

The previous sections have given the readers an overview of the societal context where my study takes place, exploring only some of the many noticeable cultural differences within the Saudi population. This section takes the reader forward from the macroscopic overview of my research context to the micro reality for Saudi women learners in Saudi HEIs.

#### **1.3.3.1 Female literacy in Saudi HE**

Research shows the female education in Arab countries has made some of the most significant advances in the world (Rizzo, 2012). Significant progress towards gender equality in KSA has been visible since the late 1980s (Al Rawaf and Simmons, 1991). Literacy rates over the last five decades have demonstrated rapid social development, especially considering that female adult literacy rates stood at just 2% in 1970, as stated in the World Economic Forum Report (2014). In 1992, the adult literacy rate for female adults (females aged 15 and above) had grown significantly to 57% (compared to males at 79.97%). By 2013, it had made a great leap to 91% (compared to males at 96.53%) (World Economic Forum, 2018).

In a recent review of women in HE in KSA, Alhareth et al. (2015) noted that before 1962, the Ministry of HE (MoHE) catered to women's education through one HEI in Riyadh and mostly off-campus through the ENTSAAB programme. Saudi women quickly gained access to attend HEIs across the country, and, by 1967, King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and Girls Education College in Makkah were permitting women to attend university. By 2003, Government records cite that the women registered in Saudi HEIs were already equal to the number of men enrolled (Metcalf, 2008, p. 89). Rahman (2011) mentioned that substantial progress had been made in women's education in Saudi HEIs. By

2012, the proportion of Saudi females attending university was stated to have surpassed that of their male counterparts (Rizzo, 2012). Alhareth et al. (2015) also reported that 22 of the 24 universities existing now accept females.

### **1.3.3.2 Challenges for Saudi women**

Recent literature has shown that there are still significant challenges faced by Saudi women in HE presently, and traditional residual barriers do still transcend governmental reforms. Behind closed doors, a *mahram* (male legal guardian) can legally object to a woman's pursuit of education or her employment, as this falls within the privacy of patriarchal laws. Le Renard (2008) explains that many gender-related reforms are not yet compulsory but still depend on the family's choice. As Alhareth et al. (2015) claim, 'Social and religious beliefs obstruct female education to a greater or lesser degree depending on their location in the country' (p. 12). Traditional barriers also relate to the sociocultural landscape of cultural differences in KSA:

'Despite all the efforts being made, women who live in the northern and southern regions continue to have fewer opportunities to access higher education than those who live in the other regions because of the distribution of universities (...) and the barriers of traditional culture' (Alhareth et al., 2015, p. 10).

### **1.3.3.3 Access to HE in KSA**

Considering access to education as an indicator of gender equality has been criticised. In 2006, Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam asserted that women make up a greater share of university enrolment only because more young men study abroad. The proportion of female learners enrolled is much higher, but the indicator of enrolment is inaccurate because the statistical representation is skewed. In 2015, Alhareth et al. argued that there has been a definite increase in Saudi females studying in HEIs abroad as well, from approximately only 3,879 nationwide in 2004–05 to 35,700 in 2011–12.

While gender equality is measured in terms of enrolment rates, another key indicator is the specialisation a woman is permitted to pursue. Tertiary education for women was initially perceived according to traditional gender norms. 'The goal of education for women was for them to be successful housewives and good mothers' (Alhareth et al., 2015, p. 12). Previously, there were restrictions on certain degrees, and acceptable specialisations were related to the fields of education, humanities and nursing. Government reforms have diversified the degrees that women have access to now, and this has increased their professional opportunities (Badry and Willoughby, 2015). Saudi women can now study bachelor's degree subjects such as engineering and medicine at certain universities in KSA. Badry and Willoughby (2015), however, claimed that specific subjects remain restricted to men. Overall, it seems that the gender-related impact of recent HE reforms to educate female students is witnessing an upward trend in increasing female participation in Saudi society.

#### **1.3.3.4 Gender-segregation in Saudi HE**

The research context is unique because learning environments in KSA are gender-segregated in keeping with Islamic law. The reality of gender-segregation in Saudi HEIs is a significant reality to include when describing the Saudi context of this study, as it affects the female faculty members and Saudi female learners alike. It is reasoned that gender-segregation in Saudi HEIs permits Muslim women to access education fairly and without feeling any discomfort that a co-educational environment could cause (Metcalf, 2008). The educational system was gender-segregated from its inception, according to the Saudi religious paradigm of Islamic education for girls and boys. While Islam promotes literacy through Qur'anic 'circles' for boys and girls (Vassiliev, 2013), there was no official public education system before 1954 (Al Rawaf and Simmons 1991). The national strategy for establishing its education system was introduced in the 1930s based on Islamic laws. By 1954, the Ministry of Education (MoE) was established for males, while the General Presidency for Girls' Education was established for females (Alhareth et al., 2015).

Gender-segregation in HE in KSA poses a significant challenge. The investment in segregated infrastructures that comply with religious requirements, such as separate entrances in all public buildings, is noteworthy. In terms of practicalities in Saudi HEIs, segregation requires mirrored HE educational policies for both male/female HEIs. It also doubles-up human resources to provide for administration and education in female/male HEIs. With new reforms for access to education, male-only universities would need to be entirely restructured to include women's areas in HEIs. Therefore, the Saudi government has invested substantially in the expansion of female-only HEIs or restructuring previously male-only HEIs to ensure that gender-segregated educational facilities can also cater to Saudi women in HE. Female-only and male-only campuses are now prevalent. These efforts to provide equal access to education based on sociocultural factors have significantly increased women's enrolment in HE (Baki, 2004). Access to tertiary education is nationwide.

#### **1.3.3.5 Background of Saudi women in the study**

I now sum up the participants described in my study as cohort 2a and 2b, who were Saudi women EFL learners. This study is representative of Saudi women who are actively enrolled in diverse female-only Saudi HEIs or in HEI female campuses, who did not participate in scholarships abroad but pursued their specialisations in their home country. The majority of them had exposure to western cultural influences in their childhood through technology. However, they only met their first native speaker EFL teacher at the tertiary level of their education, having attended Saudi run state-schools. Due to the location of the study – the capital city – they are representative of women who have had more opportunity to access tertiary education than others in more remote areas. This study is also representative of a sample that has the full support of their *mahrams* (male legal guardian) to pursue further education, despite the traditional barriers that may still restrict women's access to HE in other areas of the country (Alhareth et al., 2015). The location of the study also implies, arguably, that they

have had more exposure to cultural globalisation. They have experienced cultural sensitivity in education but may have accessed various informal learning sources and social media platforms, depending on their family world views. The degree type is specified in the participant profile (4.4.3), but the Saudi HEI where each participant is enrolled is not named for ethical reasons (see Section 3.2.3).

#### **1.3.3.6 Background of the western women in the study**

I now sum up the participants designated in my study as cohort 1, who were all western women EFL teachers (hereafter described as ‘western teachers’). The western teachers are expatriates working in the education sector of KSA, and they are considered an elite minority among the larger immigrant community. Near the completion of my study, *Saudification* (the government policy of reserving jobs and specific sectors for nationals) had just started implementing changes in the EFL sector in Saudi HEIs which may reduce the reliance on western teachers for these academic positions in Saudi HEIs in the future. Therefore, the sample of teachers in my study had unparalleled opportunities and benefits while working in KSA as described in a sample Job Offer in 2013 (see Appendix 1). Still, these offers may have changed due to recent reforms in the HE sector. As EFL professionals, western teachers enjoyed a higher social status in Saudi HEIs than in other EFL workplaces. For the background of my study, I would have included statistics on female expatriates working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs; however, this information was inaccessible.

### **1.4 Statement of the research issues**

#### **1.4.1 The importance of English in KSA**

In many non-English speaking contexts, there is a growing recognition of the importance of English in various sectors beyond HE. Internationalisation policies are aimed at meeting the increasing demand in various sectors that require high levels of English language competence, as a means of constructing knowledge through English language ‘products’ and ‘services’ (Phan and Barnawi, 2015; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017) (see Section 2.3).

At the time of the study, the Saudi government had already heavily invested in projects, such as “Colleges of Excellence”, to reform its entire technical and vocational education in HEIs across the country to increase English language proficiency of Saudi citizens. Most Saudi private and government HEIs are now using English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their programmes, especially in areas like engineering, medicine, business and information technology. Many new fields of specialisation also require entry levels of English language competence to enrol (see Section 1.1.3).

Saudi undergraduates are therefore obliged to attend mandatory EFL courses throughout their Foundation Programme or Preliminary Year Programmes (PYP). In Saudi HEIs, attendance in EFL courses is a prerequisite for further study. Thus, English is a formidable obstacle to overcome for Saudi nationals who wish to pursue tertiary education, even more so for certain career paths that require a much higher level of English proficiency than others. It demonstrates how

important English has become in recent times. Saudi undergraduates who struggle to obtain the minimum English proficiency level required in their chosen degree field may not progress with their tertiary education, which frustrates their learning aspirations and their personal development. It is one aspect of the research issue in question.

### ***1.4.2 English teaching pedagogy in KSA***

In KSA, the PYP programme aims to bridge the gap between high school and college, helping Saudi undergraduates acquire the necessary language skills for their chosen degree fields. The government invests heavily in recruiting thousands of NS teachers with EFL qualifications for PYP programmes, to help students bridge the gap. For many Saudi students, this may be the first time they meet a westerner or experience an NS teacher.

This new experience with native speakers means that Saudi undergraduates also experience a change in English teaching pedagogy. In exploring the challenge facing students, I refer to Saudi scholars, Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017) who discuss two in-depth studies in KSA, which are included to give background to English teaching pedagogy. One study was a comprehensive analysis of the practices of EFL instruction in Saudi public schools (Zaid, 1993, cited in Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 207). The other surveyed public school teachers' as well as HE professors' perspectives on the topics and roles that should be emphasised in EFL teacher preparation courses (Zafer, 2002, cited in Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 207). The findings of Zaid's (1993) study revealed that,

'EFL classrooms were mainly teacher-centred and that the audiolingual method is dominating teachers' practices, although some respondents believed that these methods need to be replaced with other methods such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), that are perceived to promote skills of communication in English more effectively' (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 207).

The findings of Zafer's (2002) study revealed that 'the audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods are preferred and also used by the majority of Saudi teachers' (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 207). Rather than incorporating the use of blended learning into traditional pedagogy, Zafer's study shows that EFL teaching still relies on audiolingual and grammar-translation methods. Without blended learning, teaching in this research context also limits the learner experience to textbook-based learning. The lack of innovative teaching methodology, arguably, can negatively affect language acquisition and learner motivation (further discussed in section 2.4.1).

In my experience, most western EFL teachers expect to instruct using current pedagogy, that of CLT, and to incorporate e-learning tools into teaching; instead, they must adapt to the restrictions and cultural sensitivities in the Saudi classroom. It means that the EFL teaching context is unique and may be challenging to newly recruited western teachers who are unfamiliar with such limitations on blended learning, censorship and reliance on book-based teaching. They may find using only traditional pedagogy, i.e. audiolingual and grammar-

translation methods, restricts them as EFL teachers and they struggle to adapt to the cultural sensitivity required of educators in Saudi EFL practice.

### ***1.4.3 Cultural sensitivity in Saudi EFL practice***

EFL teachers must adapt their pedagogy to the learner needs and cultural sensitivities in the Saudi classroom. In the Saudi HEI where I worked, an orientation session was provided in the English department for new western teachers. The session aimed to orientate the new staff and provide an intercultural overview of KSA to help them adapt to the unique setting within and outside the classroom. It also served to clarify the institution's sensitivity in the Saudi EFL classroom. It cautioned new western women EFL teachers about the sociocultural aspects of living and working in HEIs and advised on how to best 'fit in' and 'not get fired'. The session is exemplary as it shows how much of a concern 'teaching culture' is in Saudi HEIs and the wider Gulf Arab context. The main concern lies in how to deal with 'culture' in the classroom (Brooks, 1968; Buttjes, 1990), specifically in the Arab context (Coombe, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Al-Issa, 2009; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Wood, 2016).

'Cultural sensitivity in EFL practice' and the problem of western teachers covering 'risky topics' (referring to politically insensitive or inaccurate teaching materials) has been an ongoing challenge for some time now' (Evans et al. 2000, as cited in El-Sakran, 2017, p.11). In Gobert's (2015) study of topics in the EFL classroom in the Gulf Arab region, 'a risky topic' is defined as, 'language that people avoid using because they view it as harmful, embarrassing, or offensive, and that is commonly characterised by a tacit understanding between people of what is acceptable to do or say' (Crystal, 2003, cited in Gobert, 2015, p. 109). In the same orientation session in my Saudi HEI, I was given a one-page document (see Figure 4) on the next page. It was an official list of 'risky topics' in KSA. It defined 'a culturally sensitive topic' in Saudi EFL practice and indicated the level of caution a teacher should have in discussing common EFL topics in class. I provide the original orientation document which I received in 2013 to help evidence the research issue, that of teaching 'culture' in Saudi EFL practice as placed within the Gulf Arab context.

In Figure 4, 'cultural sensitivity' in Saudi HEIs is clearly defined in this document, and this list of taboo topics helps fill a gap in current research relating to exactly what the 'risky topics' are (El-Sakran, 2017, p. 11). It is shared to help orientate readers unfamiliar with the various taboo topics that are censored in a typical Saudi EFL classroom. This document is shared to support the argument that EFL teaching is a challenge in this research context because of the extent of cultural sensitivity needed at all times.

Figure 4 The 'Orientation Document'

### Culturally Sensitive Topics: General Guide

A "Culturally Sensitive Topic" refers to any topic that offends Islamic and/or Saudi sensibilities. This general guide aims to ensure awareness concerning culturally sensitive topics that need to be avoided or cautioned against when working

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omit the essay, question, or relevant passage which relates to these topics</li> <li>• Avoid discussions on these topics</li> <li>• Do not use any pictures or videos that illustrate any of the inappropriate topics listed below</li> <li>• Do not use any audio related materials that illustrate any of the inappropriate topics listed below.</li> </ul>
<b>Caution</b>	<b>Recommended Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid discussions on these topics</li> <li>• Be aware of their location within text or activity</li> <li>• Treat the topics with sensitivity</li> </ul>

	<b>Culturally Sensitive Topic</b>	<b>Action</b>
1.	Adopted children and children conceived out of wedlock	Avoid
2.	Alcoholic drinks and intoxicating drinks	Avoid
3.	Birthdays	Avoid
4.	Boyfriends or girlfriends	Avoid
5.	Celebrities: actors, actresses, musicians, dancers, etc.	Avoid
6.	Drugs and drug abuse	Avoid
7.	Devil or demons	Avoid
8.	Euthanasia	Avoid
9.	Eating pork	Avoid
10.	Inappropriate dress	Avoid
11.	HIV, AIDS or any other sexually transmitted diseases	Avoid
12.	Holidays outside the two Islamic holidays (Eid Al-Fitr and EidAdha)	Avoid
13.	Homosexuality and homosexuals, etc	Avoid
14.	Love stories, being in love, falling in love, love at first sight, soul mates, etc.	Avoid
15.	Magic, magicians (tarot cards, zods, superstitions, such as crossing fingers to wish for good luck, the number 12, walking under a ladder, etc.)	Avoid
16.	Mental situations, mental diseases, etc	Caution
17.	Mixed gender situations (men and women socializing)	Avoid
18.	Movies and the theater: only when talking about a particular movie or when the word <i>movies</i> is used to refer to the <i>cinema</i>	Caution
19.	Moving out (not living with the family in the same house) at the age of 18	Avoid
20.	Music, musical instruments	Avoid
21.	Neuroticism	Avoid
22.	Dancing and dancers	Avoid
23.	Psychologists or psychiatrists	Caution
24.	Religion	Avoid
25.	Sculpture (human/animal faces)	Avoid
26.	Singing	Avoid
27.	Social networking*	Caution
28.	Superpowers or superheroes	Caution
29.	Tobacco and smoking	Avoid
30.	Women driving	Avoid

\*Please be advised that teachers should not allow students to follow them on their **private** Facebook or Twitter (or those similar) accounts.

All faculty and staff are just reminded of professional conduct and maintaining a professional distance with their students so as not to cross boundaries.

Censorship of culture in the classroom restricts much of the experience that teachers may wish to draw on for classroom discussion. It also reduces rapport building with learners both inside and outside the classroom, as noted in the footnotes of the orientation document (Figure 4), as teachers are warned not 'cross boundaries'. The only contact between teachers and learners is in the Saudi classroom, within the confines of strict Saudi HEI regulations. The effects of imposing this teacher-learner segregation were visible in subtle ways or stated blatantly, as my co-teacher declared, 'the Saudi girls we teach don't graduate, they just get married!' (Personal communication, 2013). The premise of my research – the systematic cultural segregation between western teachers and Saudi learners – leads to further entrenching prejudice, ethnocentrism and manifests 'othering' (Said, 1978, 1979, 1994, 2003; van Dijk, 1987, 1993; Abu-Lughod, 2001; Nurullah, 2010; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014). This cultural segregation creates further problems, that of 'institutionalised culture' (Sarangi, 1994) and dynamics of power in pedagogic practices (Freire, 1970, Foucault, 1980; Gore, 1993; Cañado, 2010). In the light of the orientation document in Figure 4, I can claim that teaching in a Saudi HEI may be one of the most challenging EFL postings for western women EFL teachers.

#### **1.4.4 Globalisation in KSA**

I now explore how globalisation is censored within the Saudi context, in specific relation to the previous section of teaching in a Saudi HEI. I claimed earlier, it may be one of the most challenging EFL work situations for western women EFL teachers because of the regulations within the Saudi HEIs and the wider Saudi context of censorship.

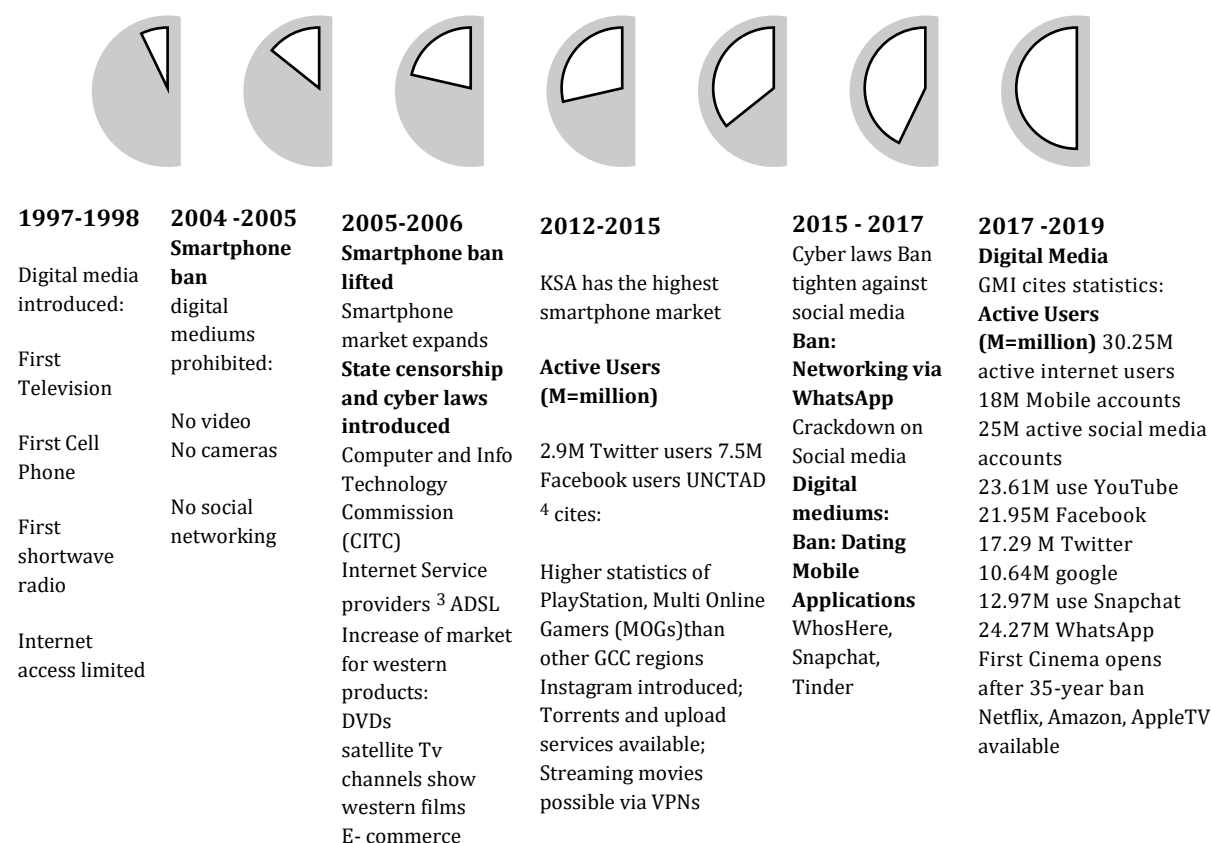
Censorship is present in some Muslim countries, which have institutionalised the concept of *Hisbah* (faith-based censorship of the internet) to counteract the negative impacts and perceived threats of globalisation (Noman, 2011). In KSA, the *Haia* (Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice) is a state-sponsored institutionalised operation which monitors perceived threats of secularisation, cultural globalisation and westernisation (Noman, 2011, p. 5). It is responsible for issuing Fatwas against anything perceived as *haram* (Islamically forbidden). The Communications and Information Technology Commission (CITC) was also established to regulate internet servers, and it even exercises *Hisbah* on Facebook and in chat rooms. Noman (2011 p.5) cites the censorship policy published in Arabic on the website of National Telecommunication Corporation. CITC argues that the internet is censored 'to protect the doctrine of the *Ummah* and its moral values, and to strengthen the principles of virtue and chastity' (Noman, 2011, p. 5). Yet KSA is criticised for its 'relentless censorship of the Saudi media and the internet' (Freedom House, 2020).

During the last 15 years, the government has repeatedly attempted to control technological innovation, and ban telecommunications and social networking through censorship. I diagrammatically represent these socio-political challenges to cultural globalisation from 1997 to 2019 on a timeline I designed on the following page (Figure 5). This timeline was grafted from various online sources (official sources, e.g. CICT, GMI, Statista and international news agencies, e.g.



BBC News, ArabNews) which I found throughout the study to demonstrate the patterns of censorship. The expansion of telecommunications in KSA was represented by drawing from many mainstream media sources, as only limited academic overview was available.

Figure 5 Timeline of the expansion and censorship of telecommunications in KSA



1997 Bayazid, T., 2011 Trading Media: Blog by The Evolution of Mobile Phones in Saudi Arabia the Past Available from <https://bayazid.wordpress.com/com-546-papers/> [Accessed 15th June]

2004 NBC News (2004) Saudi Arabia Bans Cell Phone Cameras. Available from: [http://www.nbcnews.com/id/6133475/ns/world\\_news/t/saudi-arabia-bans-cell-phone-cameras/#.W0Inmm997cs](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/6133475/ns/world_news/t/saudi-arabia-bans-cell-phone-cameras/#.W0Inmm997cs) [Accessed 15th June]

2005 ITP.NET the Gulf's longest-running technology news site: (2012) SAUDI ARABIA Leads The World in Mobile Usage. Available from: <http://www.itp.net/588729-ksa-leads-the-world-in-mobile-usage>. [Accessed 15th June]

2010 ArabianBusiness.com. Saudi gamers spend as much as seven hours a day online. [online] Available at: <https://www.arabianbusiness.com/saudi-gamers-spend-as-much-as-seven-hours-day-online-152089.html> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

2012 UNCTAD stats: (2011) Available from <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/> [Accessed 15th June]

2017 ITP.NET the Gulf's longest-running technology news site: (2012) Saudi Arabia Leads the World in Mobile Usage. Available from: <http://www.itp.net/588729-ksa-leads-the-world-in-mobile-usage>. [Accessed 15th June]

2016 Behind Closed Doors: The Secrets to Watching Films in Saudi Arabia - Raseef22. [online] Raseef22. Available at: <https://raseef22.com/en/life/2016/10/21/behind-closed-doors-secrets-watching-films-saudi-arabia/> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

2016 Arab News. (2016). Govt cracks down on those who misuse social media accounts. [online] Available at: <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1000476/saudi-arabia> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

2018 GMI (Saudi Arabia Social Media Statistics 2018 - Official GMI Blog. [online] Globalmediainsight.com. Available at: <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/saudi-arabia-social-media-statistics/> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

2018 Saudi Arabia: number of Facebook users 2022 | Statistic. [online] Statista. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/558237/number-of-facebook-users-in-saudi-arabia/> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

2018. BBC News. Why has Saudi Arabia suddenly decided cinema is OK? [online] Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-43738718> [Accessed 30th Sep. 2018].

As can be seen on the timeline, the introduction of television was delayed until the late 1990s, and Internet and international satellite channels were cautiously introduced much later (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005, p. 228). An important point here is that the late introduction of technology in Saudi society has had a knock-on effect on the present generation in HE. The term ‘millennial generation’ in the West usually refers to those born in the late 1980s to 2000. The millennial generation can remember the sudden technological transformation brought about by the information age. In KSA, the youths now in their early twenties are the age group referred to as the ‘Saudi millennials’ and this age group is positioned at the forefront of cultural globalisation today (Khannous, 2011). This age group is represented in this study and is living the societal transition taking place. They experience a vastly different KSA from only one generation before them. The timeline serves to demonstrate the unpredictability in the telecommunication expansion in KSA, and shows the historical pattern that has been witnessed so far. It is noticeable that gradual permissiveness has been met with sudden draconian measures such as bans on certain platforms. One of the sociocultural impacts of globalisation in KSA is that technological advances challenge traditional norms governing male-female interactions.

At the time of this study, the public spaces in KSA were explicitly segregated, for example, restaurants were divided into two sections: one for families and one for single men (men without their family or unmarried men). Official signage represents the governance of gender-segregation in Saudi society (See Figure 6, a photo I took in 2013 in a female-only Saudi HEI in 2013).

Figure 6 Gender-segregation signage



In less than two decades, there has been an exponential spread of technology in KSA, which has enabled unprecedented levels of agency for individuals to interact unofficially in new unsegregated realities. Globalisation opens up ‘virtual spaces’ that, while still censored by the *Haia*, can introduce new ways of inter-mixing. These virtual spaces can subversively challenge traditions and societal

norms (e.g. gender segregation, arranged marriages, restrictions on singles mixing in public) However, social media platforms and dating mobile applications are regularly banned (see Figure 5). Recent crackdowns on controversial mobile applications signify the sociocultural tensions in the societal transitions taking place. The level of censorship and the cultural controversy over technology, telecommunications and globalisation are recognised as a significant issue in the present study.

#### **1.4.5 The ‘threat’ of English**

This thesis explores two perceived facilitators of ‘western’ or secular influence in KSA: English (see Section 1.2.3) and globalisation (see Section 2.2.2). English as a global language is considered to be ‘a threat’ to local customs and belief systems (Farzaneh and Moghadam, 2003; Baki, 2004; Karmani 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006, 2010; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Kabel, 2007; Charisa, 2007; Mirhosseini, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010). The dominance of English is commonly referred to as ‘westernisation’ (Kubota, 2002a, 2002b; Block and Cameron, 2002; Altbach, 2003, 2013) and ‘neo-colonialism’ in language teaching (Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Bray, 1993; Canagarajah, 1999; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014; Piller and Cho, 2013; Piller, 2017). The concern over westernisation is increasingly evident through state control over the expansion of technology to contain the new unprecedented digital practices of Saudi youth, i.e. social networking and usage of social media (see Section 1.4.4) and in cultural sensitivity in the Saudi EFL classroom (see Section 1.4.3).

Westernisation, or ‘cultural globalisation’, (in teaching English) has been perceived as an ongoing issue in Saudi HE for some time (Elyas and Picard, 2010; Badry and Willoughby, 2015) (See Section 2.2.2). The perceived issue is that Saudi culture, its language heritage and its religious values can be undermined by English as a dominant Lingua Franca (LF) which will be described in greater detail in Section 2.3.3. Therefore, this study is relevant to the growing concern of neo-colonialism in the Saudi HE setting in language teaching (Barnawi, 2015; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Abouammoh, 2018).

In order to deal with this perceived ‘threat’, Saudi HE has implemented an educational policy of employing ‘cultural sensitivity’ in Saudi EFL practice in HE, as the Saudi EFL classroom is perceived as the forefront of this intercultural exchange. The Saudi HE ministry has had to mediate this problem carefully, to maintain the delicate balance between protectionism and internationalisation of Saudi HEIs. On the one hand, Saudi HE has seen a systematic increase in educational and professional pressure on its citizens to become proficient in English at Saudi HEIs, through foundation programmes and new HE policies implementing EMI (Al-Issa, 2009; Alamri, 2011). On the other hand, the local culture presents one of the strictest Islamic contexts and censorship of western influences in EFL teaching practice shows that protectionism is evident (see Section 1.4.3).

### **1.4.6 Culture shock and teacher turnover**

Culture shock and the turnover of foreigners was not overtly documented or reported. However, it was increasingly evident for those teachers who remained employed in Saudi HEIs over a long time, that an unusually high turnover of staff was observed. Many EFL teachers /colleagues would not remain for very long.

There could be various reasons for this, given the previous sections on the challenges faced inside and outside the classroom. The ramifications of cultural insensitivity in teaching positions in countries such as KSA are severe. From experience, if teachers do not abide by the cultural sensitivity regulations, it can lead to serious warnings, possible suspensions, or even termination of employment. I, therefore, wanted to investigate this research issue, i.e. how teachers experience intercultural challenges while working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs. Similar research interest in the UAE has recently been explored. El-Sakran (2017) linked cultural insensitivity to the retention of EFL teachers in Arab teaching contexts.

‘Risky topics could be avoided, especially in the Middle East as, according to some practitioners, they could be a major factor in terminating teachers’ professional career’ (El-Sakran, 2017 p. 11).

Surprisingly, cultural competence training was not provided in the Saudi HEI. As a practitioner, most of the terminations, I witnessed, were due to such misdemeanours or acts of cultural inappropriateness. I observed situations in my workplace where teachers received warnings for ‘cultural misconduct’ in class; in the vernacular of the setting, some teachers were said to be *blacklisted* (taken off teaching duties, shortlisted for immediate termination). Warnings were also issued for not respecting local customs and religious laws off-campus. A personal example was the western teachers of the English department were given an ‘official warning’ (three warnings and you are dismissed) for entering the HEI main building without *hijabs* (headscarf).

Teaching in Saudi HEIs is still heavily dependent on the expertise of westerners, but, given the scarcity of statistics available online, it is difficult to ascertain the number of FL teachers required by Saudi HEIs or the turnover of foreign staff. In recent research, however, the ‘excessive turnover rates’ of foreign faculty members from Saudi HEIs was observed (Badry and Willoughby, 2015, p. 167). Yet, there is still not sufficient data as to whether high turnover in the settings relates to both male and female westerners and if it refers to FL teachers specifically. My research interest to explore the teacher retention of non-Muslim western women EFL teachers, as foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs, grew. I wished to investigate their pre-service reasons for emigrating to KSA, and explore whether low teacher retention was because of unparalleled financial incentives (Appendix 1). I also wished to investigate their ‘acculturation process’ (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005; Neilson, 2011) in adapting to this specific EFL teaching context within the strictly conservative Muslim environment of KSA.

Research into ‘culture shock’ in education and the lack of cultural competence in the Gulf Arab context is under-explored. ‘Cultural competence’ (Byram and

Risager, 1999; Byram, 2000; Gay, 2002) is needed to help FL teachers navigate the challenges of cultural sensitivity of this magnitude or deal with any 'intercultural breakdown' (Baker, 2011). Research is generally more focussed on 'culture shock' in L2 Arab Muslim learners adapting to the target language settings or culture shock in immersion programmes abroad (Sherry et al., 2010; Saylag, 2014; Gardner et al., 2014; Badwan, 2017). The stage-based identity in the acculturation process (Wright, 2005, p. 26–32, as cited in Jandt, 2004) contextualises the lived experience of teachers adapting to culturally unfamiliar and challenging teaching contexts. In intercultural communication theory, five stages of culture shock have been identified (Jandt, 2004) in the acculturation process of novice teachers in difficult contexts. This is relevant to this study because, later, I anchor my findings in the concepts of stage-based identity of teachers. I briefly introduce Wright's (2005) theory here:

In stage 1 of the acculturation process, 'the teacher is 'a tourist' who initially shows excitement over the 'exoticism of the teaching context'. This is similar to feeling like a visitor, who might feel 'the right to claim the tourist's special privilege or authority to speak as one who's been there' ((Wright, 2005, p. 26). This then moves into stage 2, where feelings of anxiety, anger, and withdrawal from the host culture arise. These are typical reactions of the 'exilic identity' (Wright, 2005). Interestingly, Wright's study identified that teachers in stage 2 of the acculturation process feel as though 'they have no choice but to leave', which can lead to actual resignations (Wright, 2005 p. 27). This stage links to the aim of the present study of teacher turnover and teacher motivation. In stage 3, Wright (2005) refers to 'the stranger-teacher'. The stranger-teacher is compared to 'the immigrant who aspires to be part of the culture, but whose experience is shaped by the knowledge that he or she is still an 'applicant' to the host culture' (Schutz, 1964 as cited in Wright 2005, p. 29). As the teacher integrates, she still feels 'a stranger' in her context, but she has 'increased ability to function in a new culture; however, there is still anger and resentment toward the new culture for being different' (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320–321, as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30). In stage 4, she becomes a 'settler', when she begins to see '... good and bad elements in both the home and new cultures' (Jandt, 2004, p. 320, as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30). Stage 5, in this final stage, a teacher achieves biculturalism 'by becoming able to cope comfortably in both the home and new cultures' (Jandt, 2004, p. 321 as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30).

Wright's (2005) work on correctional education in Canada explored culture shock in teachers working in challenging conditions. I do not wish to imply that the Saudi HEI setting of this study is similar to working in prison. However, his body of work is only taken into consideration for certain parallels to the teaching culture in Saudi HEIs. For example, the unfamiliar 'organisation culture' (Geraci, 2002), the hierarchical system of control and surveillance over teacher behaviour. Similarly, in Saudi HEIs, there is 'covert teacher-learner etiquette' that a western women EFL teacher must pick up quickly, i.e. from other teachers or from

learners. There are managerial expectations that are not explicit in addition to guidelines in the Teacher Agreement form (Appendix 5). Teachers must quickly learn 'how to fit in' according to the organisational culture to avoid 'getting fired'. This study also analyses the complex 'teaching culture' in the work environment and explores challenging cultural differences that may affect teachers.

There is no support for western teachers to prepare for or during 'the process of acculturation' (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005; Neilson, 2011) to mitigate the possible onset of 'culture shock', which they may encounter specific to that of gender-segregated Saudi HEIs. Western teachers are expected to mediate the complexity of this research context effectively by themselves. The stage-based identity formation, i.e. from being a 'teacher as a tourist' to becoming a 'teacher as a settler' (Jandt, 2004) is a useful framework for this study because there is limited recognition of the problems mentioned above for teachers dealing with culture shock in the process of acculturation in this Saudi context. It not only indicates that western teachers may find EFL challenging due to 'cultural sensitivity' but also underlines an urgent need for more research and intervention.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

Given the limited amount of research addressing the challenges faced by women in HE in the Arab context (El-Sakran, 2017), I was curious about both sides of HE education, from the perspective of the Saudi learners and the perspective of the western teachers. I found that this is a vastly uncharted area in KSA, and there is limited qualitative research documenting the 'reality' of both 'FL teachers' (male and female FL teachers) and 'L2 learners' (male and female language learners) in KSA. It needs to be qualitatively researched from 'an insider perspective' (Hockey, 1993), as FL teachers and L2 learners have a unique insight to contribute to intercultural issues in the Arab context. There is a general agreement that English has social, political and cultural influences, which require further scholarly research from L2 learners' perspectives (Elyas and Picard, 2010).

Badry and Willoughby (2015), in their comparative study on globalisation in HE in the Gulf, called for more qualitative research to explore the context of HE in Arab nations. Yet empirically reported accounts of cross-cultural experience in the Saudi EFL classroom by teacher-researchers are still particularly scarce. The scarcity of studies on Saudi HE and in the wider Middle East and North African (MENA) region was mainly blamed on a lack of funds (Alamri, 2011; Vardhan, 2015). In addition, social research is largely curtailed, and teacher-researchers are not encouraged because 'academic freedom is limited due to cultural and political reasons' (Alamri, 2011 p.90).

Educational research still focuses on the descriptive analysis of the country's HE policy approaches, strategies and processes in HEIs (Abouammoh, 2018). Few Saudi scholars investigate the sociocultural issues in teaching in this EFL context (Mahmoud, 2015; Uddin, 2017). Interest in 'cultural sensitivity' is growing, but there is insufficient qualitative enquiry from an insider perspective of the learners.

Many scholars have claimed the ‘threat’ of English and globalisation on their behalf. Academic positions are being taken up by educationalists, teachers and management, but little importance has been given to the intercultural dynamics within teaching practice from those who are directly involved, i.e. the L2 learners and the FL teachers.

More specifically yet, there is a need to research women’s perspectives in this sociocultural context. Women in Saudi HE have been referred to as a ‘closed population’, as Saudi females in HEIs meet the definition of ‘a hard to reach population’ (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005). In a later study, social research on women in HE was said to be limited by similar challenges (Alamri, 2011). Qualitative research, specifically investigating western teachers and Saudi learners, is altogether lacking. Hence, a case study of women from different female-only HEIs and HEI female campuses in Riyadh is significant. To the best of my knowledge, this study is the first to qualitatively explore this research context of women in HE in KSA, which includes both perspectives. Using multiple qualitative accounts of different experiences in Saudi HEIs adds to the expanding literature on the subject in the fields of language and culture, intercultural communication in Arab settings, globalisation or internationalisation in tertiary education, and the growing fields of research exploring second language learning for women in HE.

## **1.6 Research aims**

The aims in terms of western women EFL teachers are as follows:

1. Explore how western women EFL teachers adapt to living in KSA once they relocate
2. Investigate the intercultural challenges faced in the teaching experience of working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs
3. Explore the attitude of western EFL women teachers
4. Identify if ‘othering’ is present in the sociocultural perceptions within their narratives
5. Investigate the pre-service motivation, the teaching experience of western EFL women teachers and their post-service reasons for leaving KSA, thereby exploring the low retention rate of western women EFL teachers working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs

The aims in terms of Saudi women EFL learners are as follows:

6. Explore the reasons for learning English, i.e. ‘learner motivation’ of Saudi women EFL learners in KSA, and what English competence means for Saudi women within the Saudi society
7. Explore Saudi women EFL learners’ experience of learning English in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs and examine to what extent, or if at all, English is perceived by Saudi women as a ‘threat’ to their culture and a vehicle for westernisation in their lives

8. Examine how globalisation influences the lives of Saudi women and explore the perception of cultural globalisation within Saudi society by Saudi women EFL learners

## **1.7 Research questions**

The research questions (RQ1–4) pertaining to western women EFL teachers are as follows:

RQ1 How do western women EFL teachers in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs adapt to KSA?

RQ2 How do western women EFL teachers describe their experiences of working in a Saudi HEI?

RQ3 Why is there a high turnover of western women EFL teachers at Saudi gender-segregated HEIs?

RQ4 What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of western women EFL teachers after teaching English in Saudi HEIs?

The research questions (RQ5–7) pertaining to Saudi women EFL learners are as follows:

RQ5 How is English perceived and used in practical ways by Saudi women EFL learners?

RQ6 How is globalisation understood and experienced by Saudi women EFL learners in KSA?

RQ7 What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women EFL learners after learning English?

## **1.8 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have provided detailed information to a reader unfamiliar with Saudi culture and with teaching in a gender-segregated female Saudi HEI. I began by briefly describing the process of emigrating to KSA, in my rationale, but extended this discussion further by providing supporting documents in the appendices. I have explained key terms of the study, such as: 'women in HE', 'sociocultural', 'English', 'EFL', 'intercultural' and 'westerner'. I summarised what EFL means in the various uses in the discussion as this may not be clear for the reader in the subsequent discussion. I included three figures to visually represent the context, as I explained the research context first, for Saudi women, and then, for western women. My aim has been to provide enough detail in this chapter to give a full background for both cohorts, before stating the research issues. The research issues include aspects of English, cultural sensitivity and teacher turnover. The orientation document was included in the body of the text as it is referred to many times throughout the thesis. I ended this first chapter with the research aims and questions.



## Chapter 2 Literature review

This chapter aims to discuss the intersection of various fields of theory which underpin the sociocultural impact of English and globalisation. In order to discuss these fields, the chapter begins with an examination of relevant literature about culture. First, I problematise the term 'culture' by referring to modernist and post-modernist definitions of culture. Then, I explore how these definitions apply in the unique research setting in KSA. In exploring 'culture' through various theoretical debates, the theoretical overview focusses on how culture is perceived in the context of Saudi society and, specifically, in EFL teaching practice in Saudi HEIs. In linking 'culture' to the changes effected by the new globalised world order, I define 'globalisation' and 'cultural globalisation' in the second section. I explore the tangible and intangible impacts of globalisation on the Saudi context and within the Saudi EFL classroom. This chapter then presents the third area of study, that of learner motivation. After that, this chapter concludes with a final section explaining Dörnyei's (2009) framework of L2 learner motivation that led to work on teacher motivation. As a parallel theory, I draw on recent studies of 'demotivation' in teaching practice in EFL, which connects to the issue of teacher turnover.

### 2.1 Culture

#### 2.1.1 *Defining 'culture' in theory*

'Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (Williams 1976, cited in Piller, 2017, p. 5). It is also a hotly debated issue in EFL research around the world (Kramsch, 1993; Kramsch and Widdowson, 1998; Kramsch and Lam, 1999; Byrnes, 2002; Lange and Paige, 2003; Risager, 2006). This debate involves both language learners and language teachers, alongside educators, intercultural theorists, anthropologists, sociolinguists and applied linguists (Brooks, 1968; Buttjes, 1990; Buttjes and Byram, 1991; Street, 1993; Holliday, 1999, 2001; Hall, 2010; Baker, 2011; Kramsch, 2011, 2013, 2014a, 2014b; Sharifian, 2014; Sharifian, 2015). This section will briefly show how the definition of culture has changed over time, and to do this effectively, I developed a diagram from key theoretical concepts on culture: cultural 'blocks' and 'threads' (Holliday, 1999, 2016); institutionalised culture (Sarangi, 1994); 'middle culture' (Holliday, 2016) and non-essentialist theory on culture, language and identity (Street, 1993; Kramsch, 2009, 2014a, 2014b; Pennycook, 2010; Baker, 2011; Baker, 2011). Figure 7, on the following page, provides a diagrammatic overview of definitions of culture that have been considered in the present study.

Figure 7 Modernist and Post-modernist definitions of 'culture'

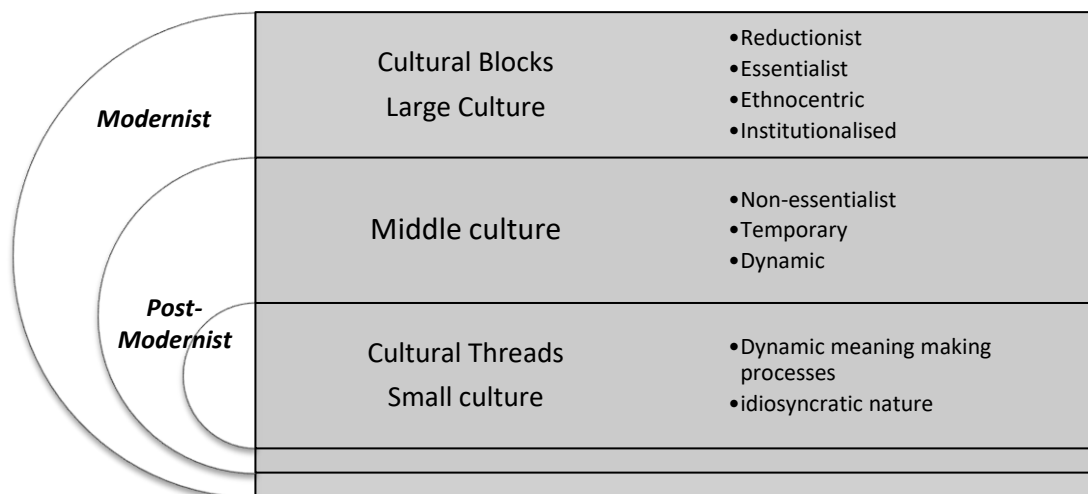


Figure 7 represents three 'onion rings' of definitions of culture. As previously defined from a modernist perspective, culture took on the form of national boundaries and fixed-speaking communities, which was read directly into behaviours and events. Still later, the definitions attributed were said to be essentialist. It was argued that such definitions depend on the historical position culture has and who is doing the defining of 'culture' (Kramsch, 2014b). Often, these modernist definitions of different cultures were steeped in what Le Vine and Campbell (1972) describe as 'ethnocentrism'. Ethnocentrism refers to 'people's tendency to view their group being the centre of everything and to judge other groups based on its standards' (Lin and Rancer, 2003, p. 63). Theoretically, we have moved beyond such reductionist definitions, yet culture can still be conventionalised into reductionist definitions of 'large culture' or ethnocentric stereotypes (see Section 2.2).

In Figure 7, representing the inner 'onion rings', it shows how the post-modernist theorists are represented by two subcutaneous layers of culture: 'middle culture' and 'small culture'. The outer layer represents 'cultural blocks' (Holliday, 2016), i.e. culture as distinct, explicit and visible. Subtler cultural definitions of 'cultural threads' are represented by the subcutaneous layer of culture; these are hidden, implicit and inferred and therefore not explicitly labelled or visible. Post-modernist theorists began questioning how culture was defined, and perceived 'large culture' (Holliday, 1999) as being reductionist, later to be termed 'cultural blocks' (Holliday, 2016). Modernist definitions are increasingly outdated due to the impact of globalisation, or 'the new globalised world order' (Arnett, 2002). Instead, scholars explore the fundamentals of culture, language and identity from the nuances in 'cultural threads' (Holliday, 2016). Kramsch (2014b) summarises the central shift in defining 'culture' as follows:

'If culture is no longer bound by territory of a nation-state and its history then we have to see [culture] as a dynamic discursive process, constructed and reconstructed in various ways by individuals engaged in struggles for symbolic meaning and for control of subjectivities and interpretations of history' (Kramsch, 2014b, p. 68).

In comparison to the essentialist perspective of large culture or cultural blocks, i.e. it defines culture along visible national boundaries and fixed-speaking communities, 'small culture' and 'middle culture' definitions increasingly incorporate more dynamic, non-structuralist positions (Kramersch, 2009, 2014a, 2014b; Pennycook, 2010; Baker, 2011).

'Culture is no longer just an objective way of life of a certain speech community but the subjective way of life in which members of that community give meaning to events' (Kramersch, 2014b, p. 408).

Therefore, culture is defined by its idiosyncratic nature, 'emerging from dialogic interaction among people' (Kramersch, 2014b, p. 408). This dialogic interaction entails co-constructing culture, which has been implied by other critical post-modernist perspectives. The dynamic nature of culture in an age of globalisation (Roberts, 2001) has been developed from Street's (1993) anthropological revelation, that 'culture is a verb'. Street (1993) redefined culture as 'an active process of meaning-making and contest over definitions, including its own definition' (Street, 1993, p. 25). This concept was 'an attempt to rid culture of the static connotations given to nouns' (Baker, 2011, p. 200). Street (1993) explained how people 'do' culture in their daily life. 'Doing' culture is increasingly recognised in today's globalised world through how they choose to define words, ideas, things, and groups. Thus, the post-modernist position rejects the idea of culture being definable philosophies or behaviours or products fixed over space and time; instead, the non-structuralist position sees culture as constantly evolving definitions of itself through new meaning-making processes. Street (1993) initially moved the definition of culture from an essentialist to a non-essentialist position. In EFL practice 'native and non-native speakers are likely to see their horizons displaced in the process of trying to understand others' (Weedon, 1997, cited in Kramersch, 2014b, p. 68).

Holliday (1999) describes a 'middle culture' as being 'distinctly formed across national cultural boundaries in small culture contexts for a long or short duration, and provides the ground on which dealing between the two parties takes place' (Holliday and Hoose, 1996, cited in Holliday, 1999, p. 239). For example, this can be between expatriates and local people or between learners and native speakers. Thus, to avoid reinforcing the culturist paradigm or stereotyping through generalisations to describe this research, different paradigms of culture are discussed, such as the 'middle or small culture' concepts. This is applied, where possible, 'as an interpretive device for understanding emergent behaviour' (Holliday, 1999, p. 237).

In FL theory, defining 'culture' is complicated further by 'what culture' is deemed appropriate to be taught depending on the sociocultural context. In her earlier works, Kramersch asked the question about 'which culture' should be taught in FL teaching; reflecting on the ongoing theoretical debate regarding teaching 'big C culture', i.e. literature and the arts of the target language, and 'small c culture', i.e. acquiring communicative competence of everyday life (Kramersch, 1993, 1998, cited in Kramersch, 2014a, p. 403). In schools and academic institutions in the Gulf Arab context, the curriculum and pedagogy guidelines for FL teaching censor big

C and small c culture in teaching the target language, in keeping with the cultural sensitivity regulations (see Section 1.4.3). Local studies explore global, historical and political developments and the impact on cultures in the wider MENA region, specifically focussing on culture in EFL curricula (Abu Jalalah, 1993; Kramsch and Lam, 1996; Al-Qahatani, 2004; Karmani, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2006; Elyas, 2008; Guta and Karolak, 2015). A greater understanding of how foreign culture is taught to the local Arab cultures through the curriculum in Gulf countries is needed (AlShumaimeri, 1999; Al-Issa, 2006). Elyas and Badawood (2016) noted that there are still not enough studies exploring ‘the place of culture’ in FL research in the Gulf Arab context.

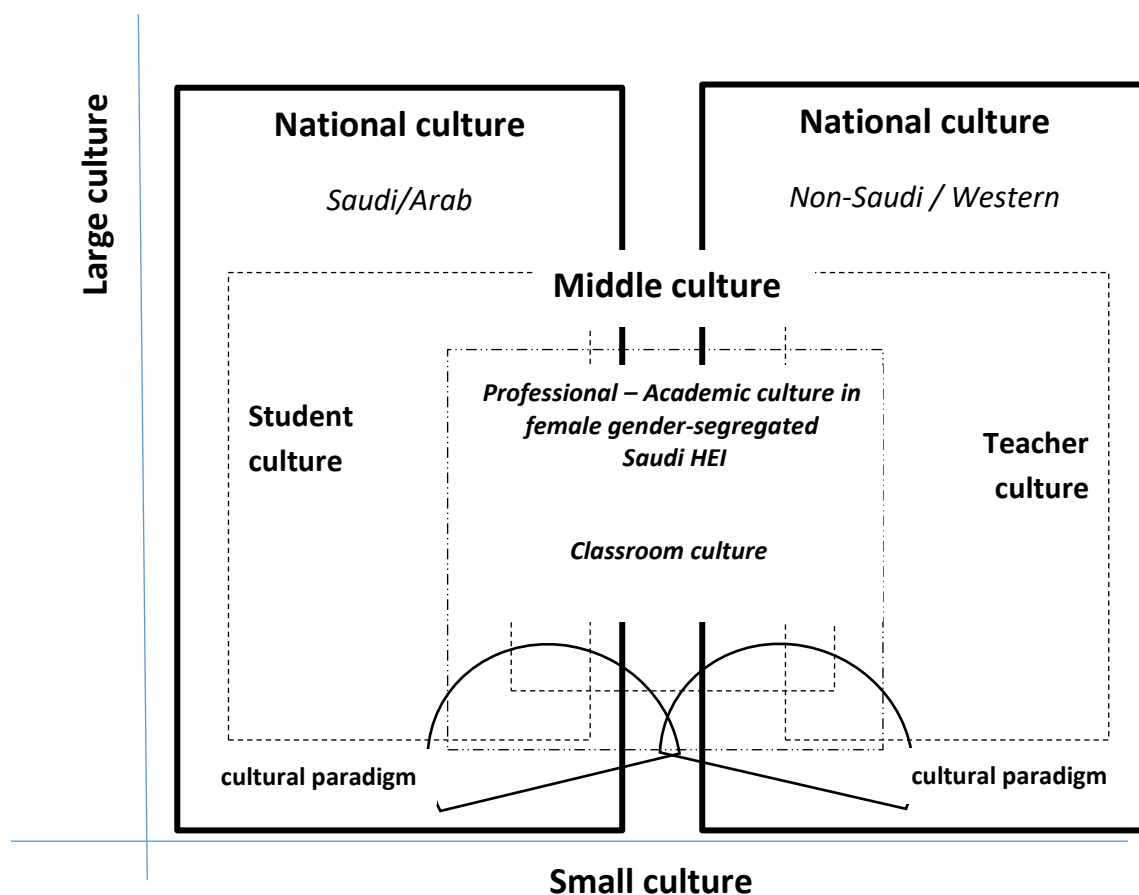
Local research in KSA is grappling with ‘the place of culture’ in EFL practice. There is unanimous agreement that cultural sensitivity should be better implemented, although there is disagreement on how this should be achieved (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). The majority of Saudi Muslim thinkers and jurists perceive that the benefit of learning English is primarily ‘for the purpose of acquiring contemporary knowledge’ (Mohd-Asraf, 2005, p. 104). However, many Arab scholars are concerned with the lack of academic recognition of the importance of cultural sensitivity towards Islamic and Arab culture in the EFL curricula used in HEIs in KSA. On the one hand, some ‘scholars of the “Strong Islamic Approach” demand removing any content that is perceived to be anti-Islamic from the imported curricula’ (Argungu, 1996; Zughouli, 2003, Picard, 2007, as cited in Mahboob and Elyas, 2014, p. 132). These scholars reflect the popular concerns in mainstream media in the Gulf Arab context, related to the fear of the encroaching globalisation, such as the ‘terror of westernisation’ (Karmani, 2006). On the other hand, moderate Islamic scholars have argued for ‘moderate Islamisation’ and demand that ‘some elements of English culture(s) need to be taught as a component of any EFL curriculum’ (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014, p. 133) to help learners assimilate the growing reality of interculturalism and navigate cultural differences better. The latter seems more aligned to recent findings on culture in teaching studies that suggests FL teachers should be trained to teach the language integrated with its culture to be able to discuss uncomfortable topics in classrooms (Byram and Risager, 1999; Byram, 2000; Haynes, 2000; Timina and Butler, 2011; El-Sakran, 2017). The present study’s findings take the position that many Saudi learners are already exposed to cultural globalisation through informal learning outside the classroom, and they need to be better equipped as global citizens.

### **2.1.2 Defining ‘culture’ in this study**

My study focuses on the theoretical position of ‘culture’ for Saudi women EFL learners and western women EFL teachers from an experiential perspective of both ‘large culture’ and ‘small culture’ definitions. In the preceding section, different definitions of culture were introduced in Figure 7; I now apply those theoretical definitions of culture to this research setting. To clearly explain the layers of culture in this setting, I endeavour to visually represent the complexity of cultural layers in the research setting of women in HE in Saudi Arabia specific to this study.

As shown in Figure 8, the horizontal axis represents small culture and the vertical axis represents large culture. Rectangles are visible on the axis, each with a different border type and size to distinguish the cultural layers apart. The 'national culture' rectangles are in bold, whereas the 'middle culture' rectangles have borders with broken lines. There are two 'national culture' rectangles, one represents Saudi/Arab culture of learners and the other represents the non-Saudi/ western culture of the teachers. The figure also attempts to show how learner and teacher cultural layers meet and overlap. In some ways, these cultural layers are separate, i.e. the 'national culture' squares (country, race, nation), and in other ways their cultural layers are shared. For example, the rectangles labelled 'classroom culture' and 'Saudi HEI' unify both teachers and learners into squares that overlap. These rectangles intersect the space between the two 'national culture' blocks, indicating a shared cultural layer between learners and teachers. The two semi-circles at the bottom of Figure 8, represent the cultural paradigm as individuals. By using a different shape, these semi-circles contrast the rectangles because they represent unique culture 'as subjective to each person'. However, the semi-circles do meet in part to represent how the teacher-learner exchange of experience can result in sociocultural changes, e.g identity, attitude and mindset.

Figure 8 Defining culture in this study



The diagram above was adapted from a slide on re-imagining culture in TESOL (Connor, 2010). The original diagram illustrated complexly interacting small

cultures in educational settings and it was based on earlier works (Holliday, 1994, 1999; Atkinson, 2004). I reconceptualised it in order to define culture in the specific setting of the present study. I attempt to demonstrate how different definitions of culture ('large culture'; 'middle culture' and 'small culture') can co-exist. It shows how the institutionalised presentation of large culture can operate, yet, at the same time, how individuals negotiate it into their 'glocal identity' and simultaneously interpret their intercultural experiences. 'Large culture' (Holliday, 2016) was introduced in the previous section, and it is represented above as two rectangles (bold borders), which define culture along the lines of national culture (i.e. Saudi and non-Saudi). In Saudi EFL practice, 'culture' is demarcated in a formalised way as can be seen from the way teaching resources are authorised, selectively approved or omitted from the curricula for being cultural insensitive (see Section 1.4.3). The ways in which labels are given to culture are reductionist; culture can be considered taboo or classified as culturally sensitive (see Figure 4). As discussed earlier, 'culture' can be 'institutionalised' by how it is 'formalised, authorised, named or valorised in certain ways, i.e. state-sanctioned' (Sarangi, 1994, cited in Holliday, 1999, p. 416). In addition, 'large culture' assumptions appear in Saudi HEI workplaces, concerning how cultural groupings, national ties and cultural differences are accentuated. The most obvious way in which culture is authorised is how it is made official and explicit (i.e. written down) in Saudi HEIs regulations. The institutionalisation of culture is also noticeable in the word choice written in orientation documents, HEI regulations, on teacher forms and in etiquette guidelines (see Section 1.4.6). In Saudi EFL practice, the language used to make distinctions about cultures, reduces culture to merely national and ethnic categories. This reductionism creates culturalist/normative generalisations (Appendices 5 and 6). For example, the simple binary identifications of culture, as discussed earlier, i.e. non-Saudi/Saudi, western/Arab, Muslim/non-Muslim are prescriptive labels of 'large culture' (Holliday, 1999) or 'cultural blocks' (Holliday, 2016). Holliday (1999) acknowledges that 'culture' can also be driven by authorities as 'institutionally sanctioned within historical and operational frames' (Street, 1993, p. 416, cited in Holliday, 1999).

Holliday (1999) argued further that the idea of culture is not a 'causative agent' in people's lives and not 'institutionalised over and above human behaviour' (Keesing, 1981, cited in Holliday, 1999, p. 242). In my study, because 'culture' is restricted within Saudi HEIs (see Section 1.4.3, 1.4.6), 'culture' may *feel* like 'a causative agent' in the lives of EFL teachers and L2 learners because it can provoke negative consequences for any cultural transgressions in Saudi HEIs (see Section 1.4.6). I claim that 'large culture' is still dominant in Saudi HEIs because so much is based on nationality and fixed-speaking communities. Despite the observable changes in Saudi society due to the impacts of globalisation that present visibly increased multiculturalism in this research context, I experienced first-hand in the Saudi EFL teaching context how the 'large culture' paradigm is still operative in everyday life.

Figure 8 intends to describe not only the more obvious definitions of culture but also the more nuanced and dynamic processes of identifying with culture. This process is being subjectively negotiated by those living and working in Saudi HEIs. These subtler processes are, at the same time, positioned within the 'large culture' paradigm of the research setting in this study. While culture is defined in reductionist ways in Saudi HEIs, there are also hidden layers of 'small culture', that I will now explain. The non-essentialist layers of culture, i.e. those of 'small culture' and 'middle culture', are labelled in Figure 8. Within the large cultural blocks of national culture, are rectangles (dashed borders) which represent 'small culture' (i.e. 'student culture' and 'teacher culture'). These 'small culture' layers are present in the lives of the individuals in the two cultural groupings but are exclusive to that group, (i.e. they do not share this culture with the other grouping). Therefore the rectangles do not overlap. In the preceding section, the term 'small culture' (Holliday, 1999) was introduced, and it is particularly useful here to describe a culture specific to gender-segregated female Saudi HEIs, and a culture specific to western EFL women teachers and Saudi women as EFL learners. Figure 8, therefore, acknowledges that there are rich cultural layers of changing cultural identities which are subjectively negotiated. On the surface, 'culture' is determined by the rules; but within these regulations, individuals *do* culture (Street, 1993) through the experiential reality of 'small cultures' (Holliday, 1999).

In Figure 8, 'middle culture' is represented by rectangles that do overlap and intersect the space between the two 'large culture' blocks (i.e. 'professional – academic culture', 'classroom culture'). As the preceding section describes, 'middle culture' (Holliday, 1999) is particularly useful to describe 'a culture' that is co-created or shared between cultural groupings. These rectangles represent the blurred edges of intercultural mixing, where the expatriates and local people as learners and native speakers merge in cultural exchanges. This cultural layer is conditioned by the academic framework of Saudi HEIs, where the classroom provides the ground on which dealing between the two parties takes place. It is within this specific setting that both Saudi learners and western teachers gain experiential insight into each other's culture. The height of the blocks on the vertical axis represents the extent to which they are reductionist labels of culture. The horizontal axis represents 'small culture' and it marks the point where culture is at its most subjective; it represents 'co-constructing culture' or the idiosyncratic nature of dialogic meaning-making processes in cultural identity that takes place in the classroom (Street, 1993; Kramsch, 2009, 2014a, 2014b; Pennycook, 2010; Baker, 2011; Holliday, 2016).

In Saudi EFL practice in HEIs, teaching is at the forefront of this divergence of cultural definitions. This divergence of cultural definitions cannot be so easily demarcated because the mindset in perceiving 'our cultural meaning' is different from person to person. Therefore, in the diagram, I depict this with two semi-circles, which represent the individual cultural paradigms (i.e. the L2 learner, and the EFL teacher). The semi-circle shape is chosen to distinguish it from 'small cultures' and 'large cultures' and it represents the unique perception of culture,

which redefines cultural identity based on the individual's family norms, her experience of cultural customs and her religious/ideological paradigm. The point where these semi-circles intersect in Figure 8 is beyond the external notion of culture; it is the subjective *interpretation* of culture that is, 'the process of trying to understand others' (Kramsch, 2014b). My study is situated at the cultural edges of foreign expatriate women residing in KSA and the bilingual Saudi women in the Saudi society where cultural meaning-making processes of daily life are subjectively perceived, negotiated and lived in 'shared micro-realities' (e.g. the classroom, the home or the campus). This focus of the study links to a 'third space' (Kramsch, 1993, 2009a) in which individuals experience two cultures (Kramsch, 1993, cited in Holliday, 1999, p. 240).

### **2.1.3 Critical appraisal of selected studies**

The definitions of culture in the body of post-modernist work (Kramsch, 2009, 2014a, 2014b; Pennycook, 2010; Baker 2011) assumes that societies of 'the new globalised world order' (Arnett, 2002) predominantly embrace cultural diversity and view the multiculturalism being brought on by cultural globalisation positively. Instead, this is not necessarily how it is received in the non-secular context, which mistrusts cultural globalisation and is threatened by multiculturalism, as my study explores (see 2.3.2). At the same time, local research tends to be more preoccupied with 'how culture is portrayed' in teaching resources as imported FL curricula and lesser focus is on 'how culture is experienced' by the FL teacher and L2 learner in the learning process. The methodological limitation of such studies is that little importance is given to the voices of L2 learners and western FL teachers in the language learning process.

## **2.2 Impacts of globalisation**

### **2.2.1 Definitions of 'globalisation'**

I now contextualise the study according to the research aim of exploring how globalisation within Saudi society is perceived. Anderson (1983) first coined the term 'globalisation' in recognition of what he perceived as 'the imagined community', referring to it as a 'bond felt amongst people who do not know each other' (Anderson, 2006).

The bond or feeling of 'being connected' to other communities through shared experiences grew from Anderson's original interpretation into a more reflective dimension of existence. This post-modern existence is now often referred to as 'the global village' (McLuhan and Powers, 1989). The main impact of this on communities worldwide was that global events took on local significance. Giddens (1990) defined this as 'intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (Giddens, 1990, p. 64). Another important definition is by Robertson (1992), explaining globalisation as 'both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson, 1992, p. 8).



Little and Green (2009) pointed out that while globalisation seems like a recent development, it is not a new phenomenon. Rather, it has been occurring throughout history. The form of 'internationalisation' of markets and cultures (e.g. the spread of global religions) has been occurring for millennia (Little and Green, 2009). However, what makes globalisation in the new world order so different is its unpredictable nature. 'Present globalisation is characterised by its being highly contradictory and cannot be seen as an inevitable or linear process' (Little and Green, 2009. p. 174). This concept opens up many different avenues to explore, and globalisation has been studied in many different disciplines. Thus, its definition is continuously evolving, from a social critic standpoint (Appadurai, 1996; Vertovec, 2007) to a sociological viewpoint, in exploring the influence and impact of globalisation on social identity, society and political discourse (Giddens, 1991; Castells, 1996, 2009; Blommaert, 2003, 2010, 2012, 2013; Heller, 2003, 2010; Cameron, 2006; Duchêne and Heller, 2012). For my study, in addition to these more general definitions of globalisation, I take a selected one from the field of applied linguistics, where Kramsch (2014a) explains globalisation as:

'The intensified flows of capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe, driven by technological innovations mainly in the field of media and information and communication technology, resulting in new patterns of global activity, community organisation and culture' (Kramsch 2014a. p. 296).

I chose to include this definition, because it succinctly sums up the multitude of simultaneous elements of which I believe the term 'globalisation' is comprised. It indicates how it is presently understood in my research context, giving emphasis to the cultural aspects of globalisation, as well as the technological impact it has on society.

### **2.2.2 Cultural globalisation**

Cultural globalisation, often referred to as 'westernisation' (Kubota, 2002; Altbach, 2003), has been perceived as an ongoing problem for almost two decades across the MENA region. The sociocultural impact of English has caused contentious debates in local media amongst columnists, educationalists and conservative religious teachers who have all raised the concern that English as 'a vehicle of culture' in the earlier work of Hofstede (1986) is 'a threat to the local culture'. English and globalisation are often said to be the two conduits of western culture that can influence diverse ethnic cultures. In so doing, local rituals, traditions, customs, dress, norms, values are undermined, consequently undermining the local culture. English is directly linked to cultural globalisation itself, having been in the right place at the right time, as it was used as the primary language in 'network societies' (Castells, 1996). Due to the social, political, economic and cultural changes that happened as a result of the onset of the information age, the structure of modern societies changed into 'network societies' (Castells, 1996 as cited in Canzler, Kaufmann and Kesselring, 2008, p.5). This process has excluded societies that resisted globalisation or struggled to transform quickly enough. Therefore, the rise of 'network societies' has been linked to the exclusion of whole countries that are increasingly marginalised by not evolving fast enough in the process of globalisation. By being intricately linked to the innovation of digital information and communication technologies in

network societies, English quickly became considered an important LF. By the nature of becoming an LF, it is now increasingly recognised as ‘a vehicle of culture’ (Hofstede, 1986). According to Guilherme (2007), English is connected to cultural globalisation through its powerful, influential connotations, ‘being the language of imperialism, consumerism, marketing, Hollywood, multinationals, peace processes, human rights and intercultural exchanges’ (Guilherme, 2007, p. 74). The western culture seems to be ‘the blueprint upon which this cultural influence and this transformation are based’ (Foskett and Maringe, 2010). The dominance of Anglo-American culture in diverse ethnic cultures has also been referred to as ‘McDonaldisation’ (Altbach 2013), ‘Englishisation’ (Kirkpatrick 2011) and ‘Neo-colonialism’ (Bray, 1993; Sehoole and Knight, 2013). Social interactions have become geographically closer through the creation of virtual interactions, and the interplay between self and the wider world has become increasingly apparent. Culture as ‘products’ (Big C) and ‘experiencing culture’ (small c) have become accessible for the global consumption; more obviously through brands and merchandise, but also in trends on social media or fashioning ‘culture’ in diverse ways (Kramsch, 2014a). Therefore, it has been argued that the world is experiencing ‘cultural globalisation.’

Cultural globalisation can be seen as ‘a process of expanding our self, by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world, and ourselves’ (Wenger, 1999, p. 176). This description emphasises the positive negotiation of the self within the context of an intertwined global community. However, Hasrati and Tavakoli (2015) have explained that the perception of cultural globalisation really depends on the cultural protectionism of the relevant country. In a comparative study in the Saudi context on globalisation and internationalisation in HE, Badry and Willoughby (2015) observed that western influences in Saudi HEIs remain a source of considerable intercultural tension. They refer to the over-reliance on western pedagogy, which is deemed unsuitable and ‘eclipses local culture’. Badry and Willoughby (2015) stated that western influence in Saudi HEIs remains controversial:

‘The emphasis on western models (and faculty members imported from western countries) is sometimes excessive to the point of excluding opportunities to develop new institutions in greater harmony with Middle Eastern cultural, historical and religious contexts’ (Badry and Willoughby, 2015, p. 172).

The recruitment of westerners as NS language teachers to implement pedagogy, such as CLT, has been scrutinised for being at odds with the more traditional teaching roles and methods in the Saudi educational system (Elyas and Picard, 2010), as discussed earlier (see Section 1.4.2). Additionally, religiously conservative groups of Arab English teachers on forums argue about how imported western EFL curricula challenge the cultural and religious identities of Saudi learners. They state there should be more culturally appropriate teaching resources diverted towards Islamic and Arab culture. My research inquires how Saudi women EFL learners describe their experiences of globalisation as well as their perception of English. I will now define globalisation in two categories, tangible impacts and intangible impacts.

### **2.2.3 Tangible impacts of globalisation**

Globalisation is defined in material or tangible terms (Kramsch, 2014a). By tangible, I mean those impacts that are visible, quantifiable and can be measured with indicators (Kramsch, 2014a, p. 296), such as the accelerated international movement of capital, goods, people, images, discourses and, second, by the many new global activities driven by the expansion of telecommunications (mainstream media, communication and information technology).

#### **2.2.3.1 Participation in technological advancement**

The most tangible impact of globalisation is technological advancement, which impacts community organisations and cultures worldwide. This is central to this study because, as I explored earlier, (see Section 1.4.4), technological advancement in KSA is heavily controlled compared to other MENA regions and censored in Saudi EFL classrooms (see Section 1.4.3).

One of the most notable impacts of globalisation is in the way technology has transformed the patterns of social behaviour in different societies. The emergence and the global spread of the internet and other forms of mobile communication technologies – synchronous with the new forms of migration – have created ‘a network society’ (Castells, 1996). The impact of globalisation is, therefore, tangible in two visible and measurable ways.

First, in terms of ‘digital media’, this refers specifically to the new technological programmes currently in use and constantly developing. Digital media continuously present new ways of interacting through diverse ‘digital mediums’, i.e. video, blogs, forums and websites. Digital media are making telecommunications increasingly dynamic, increasingly engaging and faster (Bebić and Volarević, 2018).

Second, in turn, technological innovation changes ‘digital usage behaviour’, which refers specifically to what technologies people choose to use and the extent of their ‘digital activity’, i.e. how much of the chosen technology they use. Digital activities span continents, cross socio-economic divides and influence cultures, depending on societal restrictions and economic development.

These two aspects of digital media and digital usage behaviour define the impact of globalisation on society, in measureable terms. For example, the impact of globalisation can be measured or quantified in how many individuals belong to a virtual community, via ‘social networking’ and ‘social media platforms’. Social interactions are no longer restricted by geographical or societal limitations. Another example is how digital usage behaviour can be measured to indicate the extent of global activity patterns of individuals in a certain society. These patterns of online behaviour activity can be measured using various indicators, such as engagements (likes, replies, comments, retweets, etc.) or important actions (i.e. clicks/hits per minute). In summary, the tangible impacts of globalisation are:

- Digital media
- Digital usage behaviour
- Availability of / access to new ‘cultural products’ (books, films, music, social networking apps)
- Digital innovation and an exponential expansion in telecommunications

However, such measurement also opens up various ethical issues over privacy in surveillance and monitoring of such activity. Therefore, it is not necessarily accessible for independent researchers, which limited the scope of my study on the impacts of globalisation. Nonetheless, the qualitative inquiry into digital usage, perceptions of globalisation and individual global activities can provide valid insights.

#### **2.2.3.2 Blended learning**

Drawing from the previous section, globalisation, through technological innovation, directly impacts education in visible ways. Pedagogy in FL teaching now aspires to be more 'multimodal'. Multimodal learning involves relaying information from multiple sources. For example, the language taught through one modality (e.g. video) can be learned better if multiple modalities (e.g. audio and video) are present during the feature learning time (Ngiam et al., 2011, p. 63). Multimodal learning benefits from using e-platforms via e-learning apps and online platforms for telecollaborative activities, which promotes e-learning class forums and shares diverse class project tools.

Educational theorists claim such technologies cannot be left outside the classroom, given the importance of digital literacy in the present age. FL pedagogies are being redesigned through these innovative participatory approaches in classrooms, where even the shyest of learners can benefit (Kramsch, 2011). Therefore, teachers are increasingly expected to be digitally innovative and familiar with Blackboard or Moodle and other new modes or mediums for 'blended learning' (Meyer, 2007). Block and Cameron (2002, p. 5) claimed these developments may 'radically change the experience of learning languages'. Therefore, the FL teacher is expected to increase the experiential nature of the EFL classroom for L2 learners and enhance their collaboration, participation in creative pedagogy and innovation (Cañado, 2010).

#### **2.2.3.3 Informal learning**

Outside the classroom, in today's globalised world, it is increasingly required of individuals to become ever more 'digitally literate' to navigate alternating technologies, virtual spaces and mediate learning/teaching platforms. Thus, the sociocultural norms are negotiated in each virtual or non-virtual space. Exposure to cultural globalisation through different mediums, such as the internet, films and television, radio and music and mass multiplayer online games (MMOGs), are all considered as new language learning tools in the 'real world'. Inside the classroom, educationalists are increasingly re-evaluating these as legitimate channels for additional language learning outside the classroom. This is referred to as 'informal learning,' a phenomenon that is increasingly being recognised and incorporated into HE worldwide (van Marsenille, 2015). It is believed that to be successful in today's world, 'bilingualism and ever-evolving digital literacy' is mandatory (Block and Cameron, 2002).

However, recent research in Gulf Arab contexts shows that the lack of exposure to multimodal literacies and multiculturalism has an impact on EFL practice in the Arab-speaking context (Sharifan, 2014, 2015). Arab learners need more informal

learning opportunities and much more exposure to authentic interactions through technology (Rababah, 2002). Other studies have also argued that Arab learners would benefit from more exposure to technology, especially the use of audio-visual materials aid learning (Mekheimer, 2011). Currently, Saudi EFL classrooms lack the necessary pedagogical approaches to keep up with globalised FL classrooms. In a corpus-based study, Al-Surmi (2014) demonstrated this by describing how TV shows in English help Arab learners by increasing their incidental vocabulary.

In KSA, the cultural restrictions and traditional pedagogy relies on audiolingual and grammar-translation methods and limits the use of technology in the classroom (see Section 1.4.2). FL learners in KSA are distinctly disadvantaged compared to FL learners elsewhere in two ways. First, the use of technology in the Saudi EFL classroom is reduced to merely being functional platforms or modernised tools for 'the old way of learning'. Second, opportunities for 'informal learning' and 'blended learning' are considerably less accessible to FL learners in KSA than elsewhere due to control and censorship inside and outside the classroom. Despite the Saudi millennial generation being more 'digitally savvy' and digitally active than any previous generations, informal learning is not acknowledged and altogether ignored in the classroom.

#### ***2.2.4 Intangible impacts of globalisation***

The intangible impacts of globalisation are less evident. Intangible impacts refer to the abstract, philosophical and ideological constructs of identity and self. Therefore, these impacts of globalisation are much more complex to identify and study.

The abstract conceptualisation of 'bicultural identity', for example, is referred to as identifying with a local territory or culture, while simultaneously feeling a sense of belonging to a larger or 'global' community. The sociologist, Robertson (1995) argued that humanity now associates with places and spaces beyond immediate territories and local communities. He introduced the Japanese term, 'glocalisation' to debates on globalisation (Robertson, 1995, p.28).

In other words, one may have a sense of belonging or feeling of being 'globally connected' while identifying with the local context of one's community, nation, language and culture. 'Glocal' identity refers to this tension between feeling local and global at the same time or as it has become to mean 'the simultaneity—the co-presence of both universalising and particularising tendencies' (Robertson, 1995; Bauman, 1998). Blommaert (2010, p.1) explained that social lives are organised 'not according to one single complex of norms but through many competing or complementary norms pertaining to different contexts, spaces and identities. One is, in fact, mediating oneself through alternating norms that are contextualised by the space (a classroom for example) to virtual reality (an online community) and then back again'. I use Blommaert's (2010) description here to explain the dynamic and highly complex identity that the Saudi women EFL learners in my study must have to negotiate within a complex of competing norms. From the outside, there seems to be 'one single complex of norms'

anchored in the strictly religious paradigm of KSA, but instead, the EFL learner's identity is mediated through alternating norms of traditional spaces and of global spaces (virtual communities).

Cultural globalisation (as defined in 2.2.2) can be perceived as 'a profoundly enriching process, opening minds to new ideas and experiences, and strengthening the finest values of humanity' (McDaniel, 2012, p. 51, cited in El-Sakran, 2017). On the other hand, it can cause problems in intercultural communication, especially in EFL teaching practices in the Gulf Arab context. Cultural globalisation and English are highly politicised in this setting and perceived as 'a threat' to the local culture (Elyas and Picard, 2010). Arab researchers have explored the social perception of English being 'a threat' to the local Muslim and Arab culture (Farzaneh and Moghadam, 2003; Baki, 2004; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Mirhosseini, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Al-Hawsawi, 2014; Barnawi, 2015; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). It is hard to investigate abstract concepts, such as 'glocal identity' or 'threat', because these concepts refer to a subjective perception or mindset. Therefore, due to the nature of subjectivity, these concepts are open to multiple interpretations.

Throughout the MENA region, cultural globalisation seems to be an ongoing concern (Mohd-Asraf, 2005). There is uncertainty regarding the identification of English with colonialist, non-Muslim or western mannerisms, culture and philosophy (Omar, 1992). In religious circles, Imams and Muslim scholars perceive English 'by virtue of its (western) influence', stating 'it has the capacity to empower, just as it has the capacity to divide' (Mohd-Asraf, 2005, p.104). In Morocco, Hyde (1994) asserted that educationalists have tried to disassociate English from its colonial connotations, 'as a 'missionary language' of imperialist, Judeo-Christian values' (Pennycook, 2005, p. 137, as cited in Charise, 2007). In Kuwait, Haggan (1998) noted the unease of EFL learners in studying the big C culture of literature and history (Kramsch, 2014a). In mainstream media, these debates have received even more attention from local communities through articles published in the local Arab newspapers, such as 'Qatar reshapes its schools, putting English over Islam' (Glasser, 2003), Karmani's three articles (2005a, 2005b, 2005c), 'English, Terror' (Kabel, 2007), and 'More English, less Islam' (Charisa, 2007). Therefore, this relates to a religious attitude towards cultural globalisation.

For example, in KSA, in September 2002, the starting age of learning English as a compulsory subject changed to the first year of primary school (from 11 years of age to 9 years). This educational policy caused great media hype in the local papers, Arab News, in 2002, as Imams, parents, and educators heatedly debated how English could negatively influence the youth. Al-Harbi (2002) claimed that learning English at a younger age was hotly debated, due to the concern of 'exposing our young children to a foreign language and culture will be a calamity for their cultural and religious upbringing'. Such public outrage shows how language as a perceived threat is a reality, suggesting the ongoing sociocultural impact of English and cultural globalisation in the Saudi context. Research has explored this ongoing tension caused by cultural globalisation on national cultural

identity (Barnawi, 2012). In a recent study, Aljohani (2016) reassessed whether English is still considered 'a threat' to Arabic in KSA, specifically referring to the above-mentioned educational policy. Aljohani (2016) investigated whether the EFL curricula in primary school undermines the competence of Saudi learners in Arabic subjects and Islamic Studies. Saudi citizens are increasingly expected by ruling bodies, institutions, labour sectors and educators at all levels to strive for a bilingual ability but warned not to adopt a 'bicultural' identity. There is tension between what is legitimate and what is approved, yet how cultural globalisation is lived unofficially is hard to establish.

According to the existing literature, it seems there is a residual concern that English undermines Arabic in KSA, both as a national symbol and as religious status, as debated in Saudi Arab sources (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). In addition, there is the recognition of the neoliberal power that English has worldwide and how it is being instigated in HE policy and throughout the internationalisation process of HE in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which makes it a source of contention for different groups. This can cause a breakdown in communication. Saudi scholars, Mahboob and Elyas (2014), claimed that language learning in KSA has been steeped in political rhetoric for many years, yet there is still a divisive East versus West position underlying its learning. While Mahboob and Elyas (2014) believed that the importance of English as a core subject is becoming more widely accepted, they claim that the West is still perceived 'with suspicion' (p. 132). A famous *hadith* (sacred record of the Prophet's sayings) is 'often displayed in English language centres in KSA' to promote English language learning (Mahboob and Elyas, 2014, p. 133):

ومن الذي يتعلم لغة الناس الآخرين سيتم تأمينها من الماكرة الأعلى.

He whoever learns another person's language will be safe from his cunning.

While the evidence, with this quoted text, shows that othering may be an inferred motivation for learning language, in this case, specifically English, it is difficult to hold unbiased positions. Due to the contention over the perceptions of English by Saudis or non-Saudis, it cannot be generalised in this way or merely simplified into a dichotomous academic argument. However, it is interesting that a Saudi scholar claims that there may be a political agenda that may increase learner motivation, thus taking L2 study beyond mere linguistic competence, but in order to be safe from some calculating 'other' (native speaker). This takes into account the local context in ways that a non-Arabic speaking researcher cannot presume to understand. Mahboob and Elyas (2014) drew a further analysis of the choice of this specific *hadith*, concluding that this can be generalised to language policy in many language schools. It is indicative of the central debate pertaining to the sociocultural impacts of English and globalisation. The suspicion against English presently arises from a backdrop of socio-historic memory of recent and not so recent Orientalist agendas (Said, 1978, 1979, 2003).

English has indeed achieved international status and has been globalised. However, 'there is concern over unequal ownership of English and the reproduction of colonial dichotomies between the self (the coloniser) and the other (colonised) (Pennycook, 1998, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999, 2005; Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Gillborn, 2005), which are embedded in the higher education process' (Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014, p. 9). Phillipson (1992) asserted that English is a possible vehicle for neo-colonial influences over other cultures or used in neoliberalism through language policy (Piller, 2017). This aspect in the context of this study will be referred to as 'linguistic imperialism', referring to the body of work cited above in describing the underlying dynamics of English within its socio-political connotations. Lastly, both the intangible and tangible impacts of globalisation and English are also political, but why a learner is motivated to invest in English is not easy to ascertain without qualitative study (see Section 2.3.1).

Therefore, I aim to explore the perceptions of cultural globalisation that young Saudi women have, concerning their language acquisition and their 'bicultural' and 'glocal identity' as EFL learners.

#### **2.2.4.1 Otherisation in EFL practice**

The impacts of cultural globalisation and English were established in previous sections; here, I wish to focus on 'otherisation' as a central body of work. Said (1979) originally defined otherisation in his works on 'orientalism', as 'a belief in the superiority and rationality of the West, in contrast with a stagnant, irrational, and inferior Orient, which needs to be either feared or controlled' (Said, 1979, p. 300).

Said (1979) related otherisation to the historic dynamics between the Middle East and the West as well as to the underlying beliefs of western supremacy over Arab cultures (Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014). Since then, the term 'otherisation' (the sociocultural distancing between two cultures) has been applied to the issues present in intercultural studies and intercultural communication to describe a feeling of division – an 'us' over 'them' perception – between cultural groupings.

Othering and racism have been investigated in education and applied linguistics, in both practice, such as academic institutions and curricular resources (Auerbach and Burgess, 1985; Auerbach, 1995; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997; Scheurich, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998; May, 1999; Nieto, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999; Larson and Ovando, 2001; Mackie, 2003). However, othering is increasingly being explored in EFL practice (Kubota, 2002a, 2002b).

In his work, Kubota (2002a) subsequently explored how racism has pervaded a 'nice field like TESOL' (Kubota, 2002a, p. 84). He mentioned in his article that 'sameness and difference do not constitute opposite poles but exist on a continuum, preserving the power relation between 'us' and 'them'' (Kubota, 2002a, p. 87). With regard to recent studies on critical multicultural education and ethnocentric epistemologies (Richardson and Villenas, 2000), Kubota (2002a) has referred to their implications for L2 teaching, emphasising that 'raising such



issues is the inescapable responsibility of those working toward empowering EFL students and transforming society' (Kubota, 2002, p. 89).

Theoretically, racism is said to be considered readily identifiable overt behaviours of individuals known as 'essentialist racism' – it is assumed there is an essential biological difference between races – but excludes institutional and structural racism that systematically privileges a certain racial group while oppressing others (Ladson-Billings, 1998 as cited in Kubota, 2002, p. 86). This is connected to this research context, as discrimination was referred to in the Saudi HEI handbook (see Appendix 3, *Discrimination*, p. 176):

'Like all societies there is discrimination within KSA. It tends to be gender and race based. It has been reported discrimination can be based on nationality and colour and this can also be reflected in salary packages paid to some nationalities'.

Otherisation is relevant to my study, as it relates to the pre-conceived notions of KSA that western women EFL teachers had prior to relocating to KSA. It relates to their acculturation and their attitude towards their learners with different lifestyle choices, value systems and world views. Otherisation is used to explore their mindset and their teaching practice, especially in terms of how they interact with Saudi learners.

Otherisation, even if it often remains as a merely in the 'thought life', does not necessarily manifest itself in violence or discriminatory behaviour, and it is still an act of superiority, expressed through discriminatory value judgements. These value judgements against other cultures are based on the perceived superiority of one's own culture over another's culture.

Otherisation through mainstream media is visible. Mainstream media are often instrumentalised to fuel age-old political discourses of discrimination, especially in depicting different societies, cultures and ethnic groups which are misrepresented in the media. How this is perceived and interpreted is another intangible impact that may promote othering discourses, thereby serving political positions or sensationalist agendas. Schneider (1988) observed from van Dijk's study (1987) that interviewees resorted to backing up their arguments with stereotypes and they would claim 'truths' underlying these arguments by believing the rhetoric in mainstream media about ethnic minorities. Mainstream media also fuel stereotypes through disinformation and fake news (Bebić and Volarević, 2018), and even three decades ago, this was already becoming apparent. Van Dijk (1987) observed:

'Most people in our north-western societies have no daily or even occasional contact interactions with ethnic groups, the process of social information processing is predominantly communicative and discursive: People hear and read about ethnic groups, and infer their opinions from this information' (Schneider, 1988, p. 361).

The spread of globalisation has increased this form of subtle racism, and 'technology of the post-modern world, such as ubiquitous media, has accelerated and solidified the process of othering' (Said, 2003, p. 204).

Otherisation is increasingly used in mainstream media, where political rhetoric is encouraging anti-Muslim sentiments or islamophobia worldwide (Abu-Lughod, 2001). In an interview with Alistair Pennycook, Karmani noted the onset of 'language wars' evidenced by both English and Arabic global media (Charise, 2007). Othering processes are sharply reflected in the diverse media discourses prevailing today, which reinforce the positions of domination and subordination (Cañado, 2010). An example of this is how people's perceptions of Islam and Muslims are shaped by media coverage through stereotyping' (Nurullah, 2010, p. 1025).

Highly relevant to this study of women in HE in KSA are studies on otherisation of women in media discourses. Mishra (2007) demonstrated that one intangible impact of cultural globalisation is a deliberate negative portrayal of women. It evidences how mainstream media engage in perpetuating negative depictions of Saudi women in the American press and negative depictions of western women in the Saudi press. Mishra's study (2007) concluded that the American press represents Saudi women as 'passive victims' of Islamic laws, creating a negative narrative of the oppression of Saudi women. In mainstream media, islamophobic rhetoric can use orientalist undertones, e.g. by urging the West to 'rescue them', perceiving 'Arab women as victims in their own society' (Mishra, 2007, p.268). Mishra's study showed how misconstrued depictions of Arab women in mainstream media through construing denigrating imagery intended to depict grossly generalised norms prevalent in the country of KSA. Unfortunately, this misrepresentation is combined with the omission of a more neutral commentary on the lifestyles and interests of Saudi women; essentially, Mishra (2007) claimed mainstream media are intentionally co-constructing a dichotomous reality between the East (i.e. the Arab Muslim world) and the West (i.e. the secular and Christian world). The role of educators in EFL is positioned at the forefront of these intercultural battles of misrepresentation and otherisation. It expands discussion of otherisation in a 'nice field like TESOL' (Kubota, 2002a) to EFL in the Saudi context.

### **2.2.5 Intercultural competence**

Globalisation 'has destabilised the codes, norms, and conventions that FL educators relied upon to help learners be successful users of the language once they had left their classrooms' (Kramsch, 2014 as cited in Badwan, 2017, p. 193). Kramsch's (2014b) assertion that 'all these developments have transformed the nature and the role of culture in FL learning' (Kramsch, 2014b, p. 403) is especially visible in the Saudi classroom, where the 'role of culture' is problematised.

Due to the complexity of the teaching context in female-only HEIs as illustrated earlier, the cultivation of 'intercultural competence' is especially important. One of the main impacts of globalisation is the rise in the need to foster 'intercultural competence' (Byram, 2000; Kramsch, 2011; Baker, 2011; Orazbayeva, 2016). Globalisation has brought individuals from different faiths, backgrounds, ethnic groups and cultures into contact with one another at an unprecedented scale. As I discussed earlier, the intangible impacts of globalisation (otherisation;

ethnocentrism; prejudice) are increasingly recognised in EFL practice. Therefore, there is an increasing need for additional skills to help FL teachers navigate issues of cultural identity, where traditionally recognised boundaries of nation, language, and culture have been blurred by westernisation. Teaching English is politicised, problematised and laden with associations that sometimes in the day-to-day tasks of EFL practice are easily ignored.

‘Intercultural competence’ in teaching refers to helping learners adapt to growing multiculturalism in the ‘real world’, by developing in our learners ‘a deep understanding of their historicity and subjectivity as language learners’ (Kramsch, 2014a, p. 60). It has been defined as ‘the ability to see relationships between different internal and external cultures and to mediate these effectively’. Its calls for greater awareness of the importance of intercultural competence in teaching have been voiced for well over a decade (Byram 2000, as cited in Kramsch, 2011, p. 10). This concern connects to Baker’s (2011) work on ‘intercultural awareness in EFL’ as he endeavoured to bring insights from intercultural communication into EFL teaching, to illustrate how other fields can better inform FL studies. Later, Orazbayeva (2016) defined it as, ‘an integrative personality trait that characterises the individual’s ability to and readiness for responsible functioning and effective interaction in a dynamically developing multicultural environment’ (Orazbayeva, 2016, p. 267). These works show how the FL classroom could be grasped as an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange – instilling tolerance, openness, awareness of diversity without threatening traditionally recognised boundaries of nation, language and culture, such as in KSA.

Therefore, the role of EFL teachers, in this research context, could be extended well beyond knowledge of applied linguistics and implementing pedagogical techniques effectively, to develop learners with ‘new multi-lingual mindsets’ (Kramsch, 2011). As Kramsch (2011) observed, ‘there has never been a greater ‘tension’ between what is taught in the classroom and what the learners will need in the real world once they have left the classroom’ (p.60). This is especially true in KSA, given the strict cultural sensitivity in the classroom and the transforming globalised society of KSA outside. ‘For those living within this rapidly changing social landscape, intercultural competence is a necessary skill and the cultivation of such intercultural individuals falls on the shoulders of today’s educators’ (Kramsch, 2011, p. 412). As this section suggests, exploring the role of EFL teachers in KSA, the era of globalisation shows that there is a need to develop teaching skills beyond merely applied linguistics and pedagogy, but also instil intercultural competence to deal with the tensions both inside and outside the classroom.

### ***2.2.6 Power relations in Saudi EFL practice***

In educational theory, hierarchical dominance in western education has been scrutinised extensively, focussing on the power dynamic evident in classroom practice between teachers and learners and the power relations in pedagogic practices (Foucault, 1980; Gore, 1993). Within language teaching, scholars have explored the extent to which English is political, measuring how much English is

loaded with inherent discourses such as imperialism and colonialism (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 1999, 2002). The field of 'critical pedagogy' (Freire, 1970) originally emphasised how education is laden with power dynamics. It challenged the sociocultural status quo through 'learner-involved dialogic interaction' (exploration of the student reality with the underlying objective of overcoming disadvantageous life situations). The classroom interactions in critical pedagogy were used to raise learners' analytic skills to identify inherent social imbalances of power (Freire, 1970). Scholars have acknowledged power dynamics within education and pedagogy across different cultures. However, there is less research on insider perspectives on how this applies to a pedagogic context where autocratic, top-down management is socially accepted.

Saudi EFL practice is a pedagogic context where autocratic management is accepted, and the hierarchy of management is top-down. Western teachers must not engage in 'critical pedagogy' (see Appendix 5, no. 7, 8). As explained earlier, the classroom is closely monitored, and initiating any discussion addressing any of the taboo issues, is strictly prohibited (see Section 1.4.4). The oppressive endemic systems in education are areas beyond the scope of this study, but Freire (1970) viewed learners in traditional western education 'as spoon-fed', who passively received information rather than increasing their own critical thinking capacity. Arab scholars have picked up on this issue in HE, arguing that:

'Teaching and learning can no longer be about 'filling [Saudi] learners' minds with theoretical information at the expense of teaching creative and critical thinking' (Alnassar and Dow, 2013, p. 58).

I rely on Arab scholars to describe the theoretical nature of the L2 experience and 'the typical' language learner in HE in KSA. Saudi authors refer to the Saudi learner as 'an empty receptacle' (Badry and Willoughby, 2015, p. 174), stating that the Saudi learner is spoon-fed due to educational policies. Alamri (2011) conducted a study of HE challenges in KSA and stated, 'it is important to use different teaching strategies (learner-centred) that motivate learners and ensure achievement of the HE objectives' (p. 90). Educational policy has increased English education nationwide, which is now being taught at a much earlier age, but teaching methods and approaches also need to involve learners in creative and critical thinking earlier – before entering tertiary education. Pedagogic methods adopted in the English language classroom in government schools have been criticised. A Saudi doctoral study found that in Saudi learners' educational experience, greater priority was given to memorising information than to self-expression, speculation or analytical skills (Almutairi, 2007). The competence and preparedness of the Saudi teachers of English may vary, but English teaching before HE is still being criticised for being too reliant on recitation and rote learning (Alexander et al., 2016) as noted earlier (see Section 1.4.2).

There is a significant difference in how management operates in the Saudi educational system, compared to western HEIs. FL teachers are positioned within a hierarchical framework, based on the strict authoritative or top-down control (Elyas and Picard, 2010). For FL teachers adapting to this institutional

culture within the educational system, this organisational aspect is important to understand:

‘Like all other teachers in the Saudi education system, English teachers work within a strict hierarchy, where national and religious identity frames the educational system, language practices, and pedagogy’ (Elyas and Picard, 2010, p. 140).

The style of management in Saudi HEIs is contextualised in a monarchical setting with a hierarchical religious paradigm. As a Kingdom, authority is a concept which heavily influences management; the line of command is strictly upheld in all sectors. Those in management who hold positions of authority are expected to issue directives to subordinates. Additionally, the organisational culture in Saudi HEIs has been considered a ‘very high-context culture’ (Communicaid, 2019), meaning that interactions are embedded in communication with non-verbal cues. Interpersonal behaviour and communication style are especially important, as well as conforming to implicit expectations of composure and calm non-verbal communication (e.g. non-assertive facial expression, low voice tone). The interaction between colleagues relies heavily on other communicative cues, such as body language and eye contact, rather than only words. Behavioural etiquette is expected according to the Islamic paradigm, demonstrating patient composure and calm respect for the ‘ladder of communication’. Saudi management has several levels of authority in KSA compared to other low-context cultures, such as the UK or USA. FL teachers must adhere to the cultural nuances and respect the levels of authority of education administrators and managers, as Elyas and Picard (2010) outlined:

‘English lecturers operate within a system with the dean is at the top of the ladder where communication passes from him to the head of the department and then to the English Committee to and finally reaches the language instructors who transmit the information to the learners based on the policy provided to them’ (Elyas and Picard, 2010, p. 140).

Therefore, the role of the FL teacher is more of ‘a transmitter’ who is not expected to undermine Saudi nationalism or Islamic values with suggested improvements or modifications to curricula design or content. If a western teacher addresses top management directly, with suggestions or complaints, she may be perceived as too assertive. The distinction between subordinates and managers is different to a western model, and FL teachers are often challenged by these subtle aspects. Power dynamics are visible both inside and outside the Saudi classroom. This high-context culture may be especially challenging for FL teachers if miscommunication arises while dealing with the managerial system directly.

From personal observation, assertive behaviour, such as making a complaint (action), can be perceived as having a disrespectful attitude (state); overly emotional or assertive non-verbal cues are taken very seriously. Outbursts of discontent, resentment, and frustration in the workplace are perceived as highly unprofessional. However, there are few academic sources that critically analyse these issues in this setting. Assad (2002) conducted a sociological analysis of

Saudi administrative executives in search of areas of compatibility between Saudi Islamic tradition and western management practice. More recent research into the HE challenges suggests that management was still a key determinant in reforms. Badry and Willoughby (2015, p. 174) recommended 'training for those in academic leadership roles (in Saudi HEIs) to develop the effectiveness and quality of their leadership'. The intercultural problem persists; in 2015, a review was posted about a Saudi HEI by an anonymous FL teacher on Glassdoor (a website where employees and former employees anonymously review their company's management). Such posts in Glassdoor were critical, and similar online posts with negative feedback about Saudi HEIs are usually taken off the servers. I omit the name of the institution, but it referred to an HEI women's campus in Riyadh. This post candidly describes the problem:

'Advice to management: Please look into why you have such a high turnover of good teachers. Stop the witch hunt against good teachers' (Glassdoor, 2015).

This further supports the issue of retaining foreign staff in Saudi HEIs. Western faculty members are expected to follow protocol and obediently abide by the HEI regulations. How well western women EFL teachers negotiate this interpersonal aspect is particularly relevant to this study.

## **2.3 Defining 'English' in the Saudi context**

In this section, 'English' is problematised due to present debates on 'world Englishes'. At the time of the present study, KSA was widely considered to be positioned in 'expanding circle' countries (Kachru, 1986; 1992) and KSA had been incorporating English into its national interests through internationalisation and accreditation in HE. In this section, I refer to two uses of 'English' in this study. In some discussions, 'English' refers to 'the English' taught in Saudi HE within Saudi HEIs; in other instances, 'English' is more broadly discussed as 'English as a Lingua Franca' (LF), i.e. as a language used by speakers of other languages beyond academic settings, in everyday life due to globalisation. These two points of reference for English need further explaining.

### **2.3.1 'English' in Saudi HE**

I contextualise 'English' as taught in Saudi HE at the time of this study. 'English' in this research context is taught in Saudi HEIs according to the English Policy Curriculum. Saudi HE aims to use English for its national interests and Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017) state that 'the current practices involved in the internationalisation of post-secondary education in the KSA, as well as in other Arabian Gulf countries demonstrate that 'English no longer belongs just to native English speakers from the English speaking West; instead, there are other users of English who are now striving to appropriate it in their national interests', such as KSA' (Le Ha, P. 2013, p.163, as cited in Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). The factor of national interest dynamically influences 'what type of English' is taught in Saudi HEIs by the implementation of internationalisation strategies. The English policy curriculum at Saudi HE level is aligned to these strategies, but it is also heavily influenced by 'a race towards gaining American, British and Canadian

boards' accreditation (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 206), as well as through *twinning* (international collaboration with foreign HEIs globally) and benchmarking with the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). National aims of 'accreditation, international partnerships, joint ventures, and the internationalisation of HE through English as the medium of instruction (EMI)' are highly regarded in HE communities and currently prioritised in senior official talks (Barnawi and Phan 2014, p. 6). These factors define what 'English' is to be targetted in HE. However, the question of 'what type of English' should be taught is still debated. Criticism that policy is not clear about 'which English' is to be implemented in Saudi HE (see Section 1.4.1) has been raised:

'There is no clear English language education framework that provides 'a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabi, curriculum guidelines, examinations and textbooks' (CoE 2001, 1) in the KSA. This has resulted in constant changes being made in English education curricula, policies and practices across the country' (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 206).

Nonetheless, the 'English' taught in Saudi HEIs tends to follow the Saudi HE English Curriculum Policy and the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) for Languages: Learning, teaching, and assessment. This raises issues of cultural sensitivity in the Saudi context (see Section 1.4.1). The use of the CEFR in KSA has been problematised by Arab scholars, such as Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017) who, in their critical analysis of *English language education policy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, link key issues, such as the 'unequal ownership of English', 'neocolonialism', 'commercialisation', and 'discourses of western hegemony' to KSA (p. 215). These issues are frequently embedded in today's educational policies, pedagogies and practices (Canagarajah 2005; Phillipson 2009; Phan 2013). They claim learning, teaching, and assessment of the CEFR framework, widely accepted as a European framework, with its political, ideological, sociocultural, psychological and pedagogical issues, is not even relevant to Europe itself—the framework's main target, as noted in comprehensive accounts of these issues (See Fulcher 2004; Alderson 2007; Bonnet 2007; Barnawi 2012). According to Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017), Saudi education has been using CEFR as a benchmark for language programmes somewhat uncritically, and this needs further debate and consideration.

'English has been adversely influencing the values and cultural identity of the KSA in much more complex and deeper ways: i.e. it is creating a colonial mentality—the superior western 'Self' and the inferior 'Other' (Saudis)' (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 216).

Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017), in their analysis of the threat of English, claim that in some conservative wings it is perceived that the Saudi government, through the superficial appearance of having EMI programmes in its HEI curricula, 'is unknowingly increasing academic capitalism and the hegemony of western heritage in the country' (p.216). They continue that, 'the practices of English education in the KSA are based mainly on top-down approaches which consist of importing western 'products' and 'services'' (see Section 1.4.1), and

this, in turn, continues to shape and reshape policies, research, pedagogies and practices of English instruction across the country'; because of this higher status, western 'products' and 'services' are perceived as better or more desirable. The drive for international accreditation and related HE policies that benchmark language competence is directly affecting the students in Saudi HEIs (see Section 2.3). The importance of obtaining English language proficiency certification, such as IELTS, is also increasing. This drive is also evidenced by the competitive pressure to increase the English proficiency index rankings of HEIs in Gulf states. Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi (2017) claim, when referring to a comprehensive report on the latest national rankings in worldwide English proficiency, that KSA occupied 'the lowest ranking in the English proficiency index of 2013, compared to other oil-rich Gulf States countries of the Middle East' over a six-year period (Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p.209).

### **2.3.2 'EFL' in Saudi HE**

The question of 'what type of English' should be taught in Saudi HE increasingly relates to the specific use of English in various HEIs nationwide, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Vocational/Occupational Purposes (EVP) English. For simplicity, in this study, I do not use these variations; instead, I chose 'English as a Foreign Language' (EFL) in my study, unless specified otherwise. I chose to use the key term 'EFL', and I do not use other terms to avoid confusing this key term with other similar acronyms, e.g. English Language Teaching (ELT). As my study focusses on foreign language teachers and Saudi language learners, 'EFL' was considered more accurate.

Furthermore, two issues of English as EFL arise. Firstly, 'EFL' in this study is different to 'EFL' in other contexts due to the requirement of a high level of cultural sensitivity, in addition to regular EFL teaching pedagogy (see Section 1.4.2). Secondly, EFL practice is at the forefront of the Saudi HE challenge to accredit and internationalise because EFL teachers implement the curriculum and English policy. EFL teachers help learners obtain English language proficiency certification, such as IELTS, or sit assessments in Foundation programmes in Saudi HEIs. It is the meeting point of foreign and local dynamics that theorists are still trying to explore.

### **2.3.3 'English' as a *Lingua Franca***

In some discussions, 'English' is not restricted to what is officially taught or learnt in Saudi HEIs, but also refers to how English is used informally through dynamic communication patterns and diversified practices as a result of globalisation (See section 2.2.2). I also refer to 'English' as LF because of its broader associations well beyond the official English taught in the HE context in KSA. The users of English in this study, i.e. teachers and learners, are ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse, which further complicates defining 'what English is' in this study which explores both Native Speakers' (NS) perceptions of English and Non-Native Speakers' (NNS) perceptions of English.



## 2.4 Learner motivation

One of my aims for the research on Saudi women is to explore the reasons for learning English, i.e. the 'learner motivation' of Saudi women EFL learners in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) work on the socio-educational model of second language acquisition claimed that the main reason for learning a second language was 'integrativeness'. Dörnyei (2009, p. 22) defines this as 'a genuine interest to come closer to the other language community', and his work (2009) was focussed on challenging 'intergrativeness'. His body of work opened up the field of second language acquisition (SLA) to a psychosocial perspective with a focus on affect, attitude, relations and motivation, and various new concepts began to emerge. Motivation theory became integral to new works on Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (MacIntyre, 2002; Dörnyei, 2008, 2009; MacIntyre et al., 2009). Motivation was said to be 'the engine that drives the system' (Gardner, 1988, cited in MacIntyre et al., 2009, p. 44).

However, Clement and Kruidenier's (1983) paper claimed that four orientations drive motivation: 'travel', 'friendship', 'knowledge' and 'instrumental orientation'. Ushioda's (2009) qualitative work uncovered eight new, more complex motivation constructs (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2013), of which, for relevance, I will select only a few. These are 'external pressures/incentives', 'integrative disposition' comprising language-intrinsic goals (i.e. 'personal goals', 'desired levels of L2 competence') and 'academic interest' (i.e. interest in the literature of the target FL language). The research area of motivation theory is limited in the qualitative analysis of learner motivation, especially in this research context. For the purpose of studying learner motivation, Possible Selves Theory is now explored.

### 2.4.1 Possible Selves Theory

The phrase 'glocal' identity was introduced in previous sections, as I wished to foreground the possible construction of 'a sense of self' and 'subjectivity' (Darvin, and Norton, 2015, p. 21) of Saudi women EFL learners in this section. This section explores in greater detail the simultaneous local identity construction while living in the Saudi context that restricts cultural identity, individual agency and the use of technology. It shows the tensions created by having bilingual competence while, at the same time, not being allowed to fully embrace a 'bicultural' identity. English language competence is believed increasingly important for the present generations of NNS of English, as it is already a fundamental requirement for individual socio-economic mobility in many societies. The question remains, why do Saudi women EFL learners want to learn English?

Dörnyei's (2009) theoretical approach is best-suited to study this for two main reasons. First, it is based on the personality psychology of Possible Selves Theory and it describes how individuals perceive themselves in goal-directed behaviour, e.g. the learning of English / teaching of English. It basically helps provide structure to a qualitative study and explore the reasons behind language acquisition.

Second, it is particularly insightful in analysing the experiences and perceptions of the self at different stages of experience (i.e. 'before', 'during' and 'after'), which mirrors the narrative inquiry methodology of the present study. It has the flexibility required to explore different cultural contexts, and, therefore, it anchors the study within clear theoretical parameters.

Possible Selves Theory is a psychological concept that applies to all areas of self-perception and goal-directed activity (Higgins et al., 1985; Markus and Nurius, 1986; Oyserman and Markus, 1990; Carver et al., 1994; Dörnyei, 2005, 2006, 2008). I adapted these works cited above into Table 1 to summarise the different selves into the tabular form. This was to make it easier to reference works from the psychological foundation in the discussion that follows.

Table 1 Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System

	<b>Selves</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Theorist</b>	<b>Example</b>
1.	<b>Ideal self</b>	'ideal selves that we would very much like to become'	Markus and Nurius (1986: 954).	representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes, e.g. 'the successful self, the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self'
2.	<b>Feared self</b>	'negative selves we are afraid of becoming'	Oyserman and Markus's (1990)	the 'alone self', the 'depressed self', the 'incompetent self'
3.	<b>Ought self</b>	'attributes one ought to possess'	Carver et al. (1994), Higgins et al. (1985)	representation of someone else's sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibilities
4.	<b>L2 Learning experience</b>	immediate impact of the environment and experience	Dörnyei's (2005)	'enjoyment' or a 'sense of accomplishment'

As Table 1 shows, Dörnyei argues that there are four categories. The first category is 'the ideal self' (own vision of self) in the 'possible selves' framework, which identifies the desired attributes that one would ideally possess. This is considered a strong motivator.

The second category is the 'feared self' (Oyserman and Markus, 1990), which operates to stop a future self that represents what is the least acceptable in the individual's self-concept. It has 'a 'prevention focus', as it regulates behaviour by guiding the individual away from something' (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13). It motivates learners effectively because they fear the consequences.

The third category, 'the ought-to self' (other's vision of self) is internalised social or external pressures or attributes, which is governed by someone else's sense of duties, obligations or moral responsibility. It is a strong motivator, but it 'bears little resemblance to one's own desires or wishes' (Higgins 1987 as cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13). It is why a person may conform to social pressure.

The fourth category refers to the impact of the environment and the experience. This external factor is a motivating force to learn the target language, while the self-guides are in the mind of the learner. The L2 learning experience is considered a result of the learning process. It is not an internal or external

motivator, but whether learners have found enjoyment or a sense of accomplishment through learning. For example, 'the impact of the teacher, curriculum, the peer groups or the experience of success' (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 26).

Dörnyei (2009) explained that while the first three Possible Selves are envisioned or imagined, they are very much 'felt', as if they are real versions of the self. This mirrors the 'third space' (Kramsch, 1993, 2009a):

'Language learners learn not only to use the language correctly and appropriately but to reflect on their experience. They occupy a position where they see themselves both from the inside and from the outside –what I have called a 'third space' of symbolic competence' (Kramsch, 2014a, p. 62).

Kramsch explained the third space as 'seeing themselves' from the inside or the outside, which correlates to Dörnyei's (2009) possible selves, i.e. the 'self-imagining concept'. Many Possible Selves can operate simultaneously, and this can intensify or weaken learner motivation. In fact, the maximum motivational effectiveness of a possible self is 'when it is offset by a counteracting feared possible self in the same domain' (Oyserman and Markus, 1990, cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 21). This suggests that learners may be best motivated when their imagined Possible Selves are working at moving them away from the 'feared self' towards the desired learning outcome. This impacts learners' self-regulatory behaviour because they imagine their 'feared self' materialising and, therefore, take steps to prevent the 'feared self' from becoming a reality.

A complication arises with discerning the 'ideal' from the 'ought-to' selves from each other (Higgins, 1987). Dörnyei (2009) explained that learners are not isolated from social influences, i.e. others can pressure them through obligation or guilt or even impede their self-actualisation in subconscious ways. Learner motivation depends on how they internalise social influences and pressures into their own 'ideal self'. The internalisation of external social or environmental pressure is defined in the self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985, cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 14). Dörnyei (2009) stated that it is somewhat difficult to extrapolate the level of internalisation of the 'ought-to' self, which may depend on 'various reference groups' (to which every individual belongs). This is relevant to my study, in the learning and teaching context of HEIs in KSA, where external pressures for conformity regulate behaviour through social expectations, rules and laws. 'It is not always straightforward to decide at times of social pressure whether an ideal like self-state represents one's genuine dreams or whether it has been compromised by the desire for role conformity' (Boyatzis and Akrivou, 2006, cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13).

Dörnyei's (2009) theoretical approach for the L2 motivational self-system was derived from a study in Hungary (Dörnyei and Nemeth, 2006), which culminated in an extensive quantitative study, with over 13,000 learners. Dörnyei and Nemeth (2006) measured other attitudinal or motivational dimensions (Dörnyei, 2006, p. 26), which are briefly described in Table 2, where I selected key concepts of Dörnyei's study and put them into tabular form to facilitate my discussion.

Table 2 Dörnyei's L2 additional motivational dimensions

- <b>Instrumentality</b>	The pragmatic utility of learning English
- <b>Direct contact with L2 speakers</b>	Attitudes towards English-speaking foreigners
- <b>Cultural interest</b>	Refers to interest in 'big C' western cultural products (e.g. films, TV shows, magazines, pop music)
- <b>Milieu</b>	The importance of English in the learners' learning context as perceived by friends and parents
- <b>Linguistic self-confidence</b>	Confidence, anxiety-free belief in language competence and mastery

These attitudinal/motivational dimensions listed above are related to the emerging themes and findings of my study and serve to frame how learner motivation can be identified. In an idealised image of self, it was stated that the individual naturally wants to be professionally successful and, therefore, 'instrumental motives that are related to career enhancement are logically linked to the ideal L2 self' (Dörnyei and Nemeth, 2006 p. 28), which relates to a later discussion (see Section 2.4.2) on investment theory (Darvin and Norton, 2015). Direct contact with L2 refers to learners' attitudes towards foreigners, which relates to the earlier discussion on othering and, by extension, islamophobia, especially in terms of how learners feel they are perceived by L2 speakers (i.e., their foreign teachers) and how they, in turn, perceive others (L2 speakers generally). The motivational dimension of cultural interest is used to ascertain the level of cultural interest of Saudi participants in big C and small c culture (Kramsch, 2014a), which is particularly interesting given the prevailing censorship (see Section 2.2.5). My goal was to explore the learner motivation underneath the academic pressure to acquire proficiency in English. I wanted to understand if there is learner motivation underneath the pressure to learn English, and ascertain how much they, as individuals, engage in big C and small c culture informally. I wanted to measure what reasons and interests motivates them to use English on their own. 'Milieu' is researched in relation to their nuclear family to measure how English is perceived by parents of the Saudi women EFL learners. This stems from previous research into the perceived 'threat' of English in KSA. Finally, this dimension helps measure the level of their self-confidence after achieving mastery of their chosen L2 in a context that prizes English competence for tertiary education, where English proficiency increases job opportunities for bilingual Saudi citizens.

### **2.4.2 Impact of globalisation on L2 learner motivation**

English is the 'icon of the contemporary age' (Guilherme, 2007. p. 74). Mainly because it has spread beyond national and regional boundaries, it has become the so-called 'global LF' (Jenkins, 2007). Various theorists reveal the hegemonic discourses of culture, language and identity (Bourdieu, 1982, 1991; Gramsci, 1988; Tollefson, 2006). The impact of globalisation on EFL learner motivation is significant for two main reasons.

First, we can say it is significant because English is a powerful language, considering its indispensability in HE education. When a Saudi learner is asked, 'Why do you learn English?' a standard response may very well be 'Because I have to!' It may be easily forgotten that L2 learners of English are increasingly 'forced' to learn English by educational policies. In 1958, both English and French, as *lingue franche*, had equal status in the Saudi curriculum of the newly established education system from grades 7–9 (ages 12–14). However, by 1969, 'English enjoyed a higher status. English is taught as a core subject in public and private schools across the country' (Al-Abdulkader, 1978, cited in Mahboob and Elyas, 2014). The internationalisation policy standardised pre-requisite English language proficiency levels in Saudi HEIs, as mentioned earlier (see Section 1.4.1). Therefore, Saudi L2 learners need English for other goal-orientated aspirations, such as becoming doctors or dentists in KSA, which goes beyond acquiring English language competence for its own sake. They also need English for better job opportunities in diverse sectors, as social mobility now depends on English proficiency as much as other qualifications. This is reflective of HE institutions worldwide, as English is 'the preferred language of communication and teaching' (Chang, 2015, p. 70). The value of English fluency in the education industry has attained unparalleled heights. English as EMI is increasingly implemented in the internationalisation of HEIs worldwide and, therefore, EFL teaching is becoming indispensable (Canagarajah, 1999; Holborow, 1999; Block and Cameron, 2002).

Second, the impact of globalisation on EFL learner motivation is significant when considering the indispensability of English in the job market. English is recognised to have linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). The reasons for learning English relate to external pressures, which are endemic to socio-political and economic forces of late capitalism (Bourdieu, 1991; Piller and Cho, 2013). Late capitalism increasingly focusses on performance-orientated skills in the job market (i.e. English language competence), so language has become a marketable 'commodity' (Heller, 2010). English is also perceived to be a viable 'investment' by L2 learners (Darvin and Norton, 2015). For a person to be considered in the job market, English language competence in English is essential; therefore, learning English is perceived to be 'a good investment' (Darvin and Norton, 2015). English is a means to an end, without which other goals are unattainable. Therefore, it has become a powerful 'gateway' language for other goal-orientated learning behaviours. In light of this, Darvin and Norton (2015) suggested that:

'Learners invest in a second language with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital. Learners will expect or hope to have a good return on that investment – a return that will give them access to hitherto unattainable resources' (Darvin and Norton, 2015, p. 17).

Darvin and Norton (2015) argued that language learning in 'investment theory' is based on the recognition of the linguistic exchange value as 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991). The exchange value increases the possibility to enter or have access to greater opportunities, i.e. social mobility. In acquiring an LF language,

such as English, in the context of this study, the L2 learner expects a brighter future or 'a return' on the time, resources and energy invested into learning it. This mirrors recent research in the Arab-speaking context, where English has also been referred to as 'a language commodity' (Heller, 2003) in the oil-rich GCC states (Barnawi, 2012, 2015a; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). English is powerful because, despite the arguments calling English 'a threat' to the local culture, it is recognised as 'linguistic capital' (Bourdieu, 1991). It is believed that by having English language competence, Arabic speakers can better integrate with the contemporary era. Being well versed with two *lingue franche*, i.e. Arabic and English, enables more interconnectivity between the Arabic and English-speaking worlds, and language therefore becomes an indispensable 'intercultural tool' (Orazbayeva, 2016).

Third, the impact of globalisation on EFL learner motivation is significant because of the social pressure to learn English. English grants access to global citizenship in the present times. Arnett (2002) defined 'bicultural identity' as an additional motivator for learners, especially in connection with glocal identity. Dörnyei (2009) acknowledged this pressure as an additional motivating force for EFL learners:

'A key motivation in language learning is the pressure for most people to develop a bicultural identity, in which part of their identity is rooted in their local culture while another part is associated with a global identity that links them to the international mainstream' (Arnett, 2002, cited in Dörnyei, 2009, p. 24).

The use of the word 'pressure' here shows that it is not merely a question of choosing a 'bicultural identity'; rather, there is an external social expectation of becoming 'globalised'. Presently, in KSA, English is perceived as 'the political and the economic connection to the rest of the world' (Le Ha and Barnawi, 2015, p. 2). English is not only intricately connected to education through internationalisation in HE but also to cultural globalisation (see Section 2.2.2). Due to all of these aspects, identity itself is increasingly complex to define in a globalised era.

## **2.5 Teacher motivation**

This section contextualises my study within motivational theory, with specific attention given to aspects of teacher motivation in EFL teaching, where possible. This literature review on teacher motivation is drawn from fields of education and applied linguistics because there is a noticeable gap in EFL research. Kumazawa (2013) stated there is a lack of attention to teacher motivation in EFL (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005; Gheralis-Roussos, 2003; Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2013). In Section 2.5.1, key concepts in teacher motivation are summarised; however, as already mentioned, these theories apply to general teaching and not specifically to EFL teaching.

### **2.5.1 Teacher motivation**

For the purpose of contextualising my study, three main 'motivators' as to why individuals become teachers are made evident:

- i. *Intrinsic motivation*: which refers to a desire for 'personal growth' (Sinclair et al, 2008), or as 'intrinsic career value' (Richardson and Watt, 2006).
- ii. *Extrinsic motivation*: which refers to 'material benefits' and 'job security' (Sinclair et al, 2008); or what is referred to as 'personal utility values' (Richardson and Watt, 2006).
- iii. *Altruistic motivation*: which refers to a desire to 'work with people' and 'contribute to society' which was the most frequently reported reason for becoming a teacher (Chong and Low, 2009). This was also referred to as a 'social utility value' dimension in Richardson and Watt's (2006) expectancy-value theory.

I first explore the 'pre-service motivation' to work as western teachers in a Saudi HEI in KSA. This section aims to provide an overview of possible reasons as to why women in HE in my study emigrated to KSA, by exploring the theoretical concepts of teacher motivation.

First, in considering possible *extrinsic* motivation (e.g. 'material benefits' and 'job security') for EFL teachers working in the Gulf region, I hypothesised that the tax-free salaries and additional material benefits (Appendix 1) were highly significant. Second, in considering possible *altruistic* motivations (e.g. 'wanting to make a difference' in KSA; creating a 'better society' in KSA for women; educating young women 'in need'), I hypothesised that there might be other implicit motivations (i.e. attitudinal and ideological) for working as western women in the Saudi context. Implicit motivations links to previous sections on the influence of ethnocentrism, otherisation, islamophobia and orientalism in mainstream media (see Section 2.2.1.4) that may have inspired western women to 'rescue' Saudi women through education (Kubota, 2002a; Mishra, 2007).

Thus, to identify the teachers' pre-service motivations, the teachers in my study were required to give reasons, in the narrative frame (see Section 3.1.4), as to why they chose to work as EFL teacher in a Saudi HEI. Their motivations were subsequently provided in the participant profile (see Table 6, Section 4.3.3). I briefly summarise their motivations here, to connect to the theory in this section.

The teachers gave a combination of both *extrinsic* ('retirement plan'; 'job security'; 'family support') and *intrinsic* ('life change'; 'adventure'; 'cultural interest') as reasons for emigrating to KSA. This literature supports my hypothesis that the incentives for western EFL teachers to live and work in KSA may be driven by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, but what is the underlying cause of high teacher turnover?

In contrast to these positive motivators, two useful counter-arguments were also put forward, which may be relevant to the teachers in my study. There is one that argues individuals may become teachers because they 'view teaching as easy' (Spittle, Jackson and Casey, 2009, cited in Mansfield et al., 2012, p.22); and the other, that teaching can be perceived as a 'fall back career' (Richardson and Watt 2006 as cited in Mansfield et al., 2012, p.22). That is, perhaps the teaching positions in KSA offer a unique opportunity to earn well and at the same time,

securing a teaching job in KSA was relatively easy, at the time of the study, because of such high demand. However, once situated in KSA, western EFL teachers do not stay for long. In previous sections, I endeavoured to describe the unique cultural challenges for EFL teachers in KSA, especially as western women in Saudi HEIs: the relocation process (see Section 1.1); cultural sensitivity (see Section 1.4.3); culture shock (see Section 1.4.6); stereotypes and ethnocentrism (see Section 2.2.4); power relations in the workplace (see Section 2.2.6). I thus laid the foundation to put forward this hypothesis: teachers do not stay employed in Saudi HEIs because they find the ‘teaching experience’ is more challenging than they initially expected.

In SLA theory, the L2 motivational self-system was originally applied to learners, but more recently it has been used to explore motivation in FL teachers in various cultural settings (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009; Kubanyiova, 2009; White and Ding, 2009). Based on the L2 motivational self-system theory, I re-conceptualised the parallel constructs L2 and teacher motivation into Table 3, below, including learner experience (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Dörnyei, 2005; Dörnyei, 2009, p.46).

Table 3 Possible Selves framework reconceptualised for EFL teacher motivation

<b>Selves</b>	<b>Learners</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Ideal Self</b>	Ideal Language Learner self	Ideal Language Teacher self	(i.e. identity goals and aspirations)
<b>Ought-to Self</b>	Ought-to Language Learner Self	Ought-to Language Teacher Self	(i.e. perceived responsibilities and obligations)
<b>Feared Self</b>	Feared Language Learner Self	Feared Language Teacher Self	(i.e. consequences of unrealized ideals or unmet obligations)
<b>Experience</b>	As an L2 Learner	As an FL Teacher	(i.e. immediate impact of the environment and experience)

As Table 3 shows above, both teachers and learners share Possible Selves: ‘ideal self’; ‘ought-to’ self and ‘feared’ Self, which were explained in L2 learner motivation (see Section 2.4.1). However, the added category of ‘teaching experience’ is particularly relevant to this discussion because it identifies how external variables, within the teaching context, influence teacher motivation. FL teacher motivation consists of ‘experience’, which corresponds to the variable of learner experience. This fourth concept on Table 3 asserts that the environment and experience, e.g. of ‘being good at learning or teaching’, can give a sense of accomplishment to both learners or teachers. The experience of enjoyment, in the process itself or in the learning environment, helps create positive associations with ‘teaching experience’. However, this hypothesis does not



account for other aspects of the 'teaching experience'. More recent literature exploring 'teacher demotivation' is key to explore RQ3, concerning the turnover of teachers as foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs. I, therefore, put forward one plausible reason for resignation or contractual termination as negative 'teacher experience' which includes 'the impact of the environment' in Saudi HEIs because of the cultural challenges described.

### ***2.5.2 Demotivation in teaching***

One study on 'teacher demotivation' in Japan is particularly insightful (Kumazawa, 2013) because it is relevant to RQ3. Kumazawa's study bridges the gap between Possible Selves of L2 Learner Motivation Theory and the concept of 'ideal EFL teacher' in FL theory. Her interpretive inquiry uses Dörnyei's framework with four secondary school EFL teachers and neatly demonstrates the pivotal role of Possible Selves as powerful motivators for teachers, as 'they try to implement changes and achieve their 'ideal teaching self' through their 'passion for the educational process' or by realising their 'idealistic goals', i.e. 'connections with others', 'wanting to make a difference'; creating a 'better society' or educating young people 'in need' (Kumazawa, 2013, p. 46). Her study qualitatively explores this attainment of the 'ideal teaching self' over the period of one year. Interestingly, she found that 'demotivation' was more evident in the teacher's progress. While EFL teachers in her study were motivated by their various pre-service 'ideal teaching selves' based on 'intrinsic career values' and 'altruist values', often when they could not achieve these through the reality of the 'teaching experience', they lost all motivation. Here, Kumazawa's study connects teacher demotivation to teacher turnover, which is relevant in my study, because it validates the 'inner world' of teaching experience itself not just the role of external variables. In the previous section, I put forward the first hypothesis in which merely the external cultural factors contributed to a high teacher turnover. However, I assert a second hypothesis here, that teacher demotivation contributes to a high teacher turnover.

Teacher turnover should be explored with a qualitative methodology that validates 'teaching experience' by looking through the lens of 'teacher demotivation' (i.e. from within an individual's teaching experience). A much deeper understanding of the unique 'teaching experience' of women in HE in Saudi HEIs is needed in the vastly unexplored field of teacher motivation (Kumazawa, 2013), but more specifically, to teacher retention in EFL research in this context.

## 2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter has covered five major theoretical fields as concisely as possible: Culture, globalisation, English, motivation in learners and motivation in teachers. As my research questions bring into discussions all of these issues, I selected those theorists I believe to be most pertinent to my study, yet much literature had to be overlooked for reasons of practicality. Additionally, I explained that the gaps in research in this EFL context meant I selected studies from different research settings outside the Gulf. Where possible, I included Arab and Saudi scholars in describing the theoretical concerns in this research setting. I placed the present study within these theoretical debates in order to discuss my findings in subsequent chapters.

I identified the gaps in the literature, which suggest my research is particularly significant, as it pioneers investigation into the motivation of Saudi women as EFL learners by documenting their experience of cultural globalisation and their reason for using English in their daily lives. This chapter identified another gap in the existing literature in this research context, which is the role of western women EFL teachers in HE, both as western women and as language teachers in cultivating more tolerance, awareness and a greater understanding of diversity. I related through theoretical discussions how this directly impacts EFL learner motivation. Dörnyei (2009) argued that a wider net should be cast with a bottom-up approach in different cultures to hear from L2 learners themselves. I justified the need for qualitative methodology that validates 'the inner world of teacher/learner experience', which will be explained further in chapter 3.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter aims to explain the research design and justify choices taken for the study methods. It starts with an explanation of the chosen research methodology and defines the term 'narrative'. It distinguishes between the two methods of narrative inquiry used in this study for native and non-native speakers. The chapter then explores the ethical considerations and the measures taken on behalf of the participants and researcher. It includes appendices as supporting evidence of ethical clearance. It concludes by describing aspects of reflexivity in the research methods that could have been improved.

### 3.1 Research methodology

Yin (1994) claimed that the case study method is appropriate when investigating a contemporary phenomenon in context, 'especially when the boundaries of the phenomenon are not evident [and] multiple sources of evidence are used' (Yin, 1994, p.1). Case study method is also well-suited for the study of transforming cultural norms and various variables in each participant's life because it validates the subjective nature while maintaining an empirical standpoint. It focusses on an authentic experience. As a method, case study would be appropriate to this research context, but I did not use it for two main reasons.

First, my study is concerned with the subjective perceptions of women in HE in KSA and explores multiple perspectives and attitudes from an insider's perspective. While case study research design is ideal for this kind of comparative work, I do not compare each participant with other participants in enough depth for my study to be considered a 'multiple case study'.

Second, 'case study' cannot refer to KSA, as this sample cohort contains a limited number of participants to generalise a country. It also has two different cohorts from diverse HEIs to generalise one 'case'. Therefore, this study is defined as 'a qualitative study' involving 21 participants from different female-only HEIs and HEI female campuses in Riyadh (see Figure 2).

#### 3.1.1 *Justification of research methods*

A qualitative study is well-suited for the investigation. Each participant's experience may be compared to others within a qualitative study, having similar and unique occurrences. As my study is concerned with the subjective perceptions of women in HE in KSA, it explores multiple perspectives and attitudes from an insider's perspective.

I combine narrative inquiry approaches with interviews. There are many examples of interviews (unstructured interviews and semi-structured) that are used as other data collection tools in narrative inquiry (Mishler, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2006). A relevant study explored the personal experiences of sixty Turkish university learners through interviews and written narratives (Özyıldırım, 2009). This study similarly combined two methods, narrative inquiry theory and qualitative interviews. Table 4, on the following page, presents the breakdown of teacher and learner cohorts.

Table 4 Overview of Study

Participants	Cohort code	No. participants	Research methodology
Western women EFL teachers	Cohort 1	8	Written Narratives
Saudi women EFL learners	Cohort 2a	8	Interviews
Saudi women EFL learners	Cohort 2b	5	Written Narratives

### **3.1.2 Narrative inquiry approach**

I focus on the narrative approach as a method of inquiry, which may be defined as a qualitative methodology (Moen, 2006, p. 57). Researching sociocultural aspects needs a methodology that legitimises the subjective interpretation of experience. Narrative inquiry recognises ‘inner mental worlds’ (Barkhuizen et al., 2013), therefore legitimising the study of individuals’ perceptions and letting ‘researchers get at information that people do not consciously know themselves’ (Bell, 2002, p. 209). Narrative inquiry was chosen for its descriptive analysis of the subjective nature of experience. As a method, it does not try to draw positivist conclusions; instead, it explores a social phenomenon by providing deeper insight into its complexity. Therefore, it is much richer in explorative value, aimed at adding layers to social understanding through the storytelling approach rather than seeking answers.

For research in education, narrative research is increasingly being seen as a fundamental contribution (Diamond, 1991; Witherell and Noddings, 1991), and it has been used extensively in educational research studies (Dewey, 1966; Elbaz, 1983; Witherell and Noddings, 1991; Clandinin and Connelly, 1992, 2000; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999). This is especially evident in studies exploring the educational practice and investigating teachers’ experiences, where teachers are perceived as ‘storytellers’ (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1990; Carter, 1993; Moen, 2006). Therefore, educational research is increasingly aware of the value of storytelling in qualitative study because narrative inquiry ‘brings storytelling and research together’ either by using stories as research data or by using storytelling as a tool for data analysis or the presentation of findings (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, p. 3).

For the purposes of my study, in my exploration of subjective perspectives in language teaching and learning, narrative research is particularly well-suited. It uncovers different layers of subjective meaning, so it is ‘a particularly valuable approach for members of the teaching profession because teachers’ narratives shape and inform their practice’ (Bell, 2002, p. 207). It is also useful to explore learners’ perceptions, as Barkhuizen et al. (2013, p. 5) stated that narrative inquiry offers insight not only in education but also more widely by providing:

‘Alternative perspectives to official or academic accounts of historical events that uncover issues that had previously not been visible and illuminate the temporal notion of experience and that one’s understanding of people and events change through experience’ (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, p. 5).

Johnson and Golombek (2002) used narrative inquiry to explore ‘a mindset’ or a set of attitudes, not just ‘a set of prescriptive skills or tasks for educative study’, in

teaching practice (Johnson and Golombek, 2002). Because narrative inquiry is so well-suited to explore perceptions of social phenomena, it can uncover layers of social understanding by providing 'a window into people's beliefs and experiences' (Bell, 2002, p. 209). This methodology fits into the theoretical field of cultural studies as described earlier, such as post-modernist concerns with identity (Casey 1995) and 'the construction of social identities' (Giddens, 1991). It is claimed that 'if a large number of stories, told on a specific topic by a particular group are isolated, collected and analysed, they will reveal speakers' cultural perceptions on that content' (Cortazzi, 2014, p. 160).

In my study, which explores the changes in sociocultural perspectives through lived-experience, narrative inquiry helps reveal any underlying beliefs, ethics, and assumptions. It can also expose hidden attitudes by uncovering 'mindsets and attitudes' in critically aligned studies, aimed at furthering the understanding of attitudes and prejudice (van Dijk, 1987, 1993, cited in Cortazzi, 2014, p. 164). My research entails exploring not only participants' mindset but also their changing mindset over time after a lived experience. Bell (2002, p. 209) explained that narratives 'illuminate the temporal notion of experience and that one's understanding of people and events change through experience'. Thus, I need a methodology that allows the narrator to reassemble experience in a retrospective evaluative stand, or in other words, 'how experiences change the conditions under which new experiences are understood, so that a person's abilities, desires, and attitudes are changed' (Johnson and Golombek, 2002, p. 4). This method is particularly useful in my study because the 'evaluation section of a narrative presents the narrator's perspective' (Cortazzi, 2014, p. 160). Similarly, Labov (1972) emphasises the evaluative function in the narrative, 'without the concept of reportability we cannot begin to understand the things that people do in narratives' (Labov et al., 1968, p. 30, cited in Cortazzi, 2014, p. 160). Consequently, this method not only uncovers hidden perceptions of experience but, in particular, unconscious motivation. This is useful in exploring teachers' perception and learners' motivation.

Lastly, narrative inquiry has been used by various ethnographers (Heath, 1983; Willett, 1995; Toohey, 2000) and is said to 'complement other ethnography approaches' (Norton, 2001, cited in Bell, 2002, p. 208). Therefore, this narrative method is appropriate and, even more so, because it is used in the study of an unfamiliar research setting.

### **3.1.3 'Narrative' in this study**

There is much debate on what actually constitutes 'a narrative', especially from different cultural perspectives (Polanyi, 1981; Linde 1993; Jin and Cortazzi, 1993; Cortazzi, 2001). In line with what other definitions of narratives and to briefly contextualise this qualitative method, I refer to Labov's (1972) well-known definition.

'A narrative' is 'a means of representing or recapitulating past experience by a sequence of ordered sentences that match the temporal sequence of events,

which, it is inferred, actually occurred' (Labov, 1972, p. 359, cited in Cortazzi, 2014, p. 158).

Generally, the focus of the narratives in this study lies in "the about", 'the what' and 'the who' of narrative, i.e. what stories tell us about the teller's self' (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 125). However, to define 'narrative', I now describe what 'narrative' means in this study for the teacher cohort 1 and the learner cohort 2b.

In both cohorts, 'narrative' refers to autobiographical accounts that can be categorised as 'first-hand stories' (Schank, 1995, p. 29–40). The narratives in my study represent their personal experiences. The narratives for cohorts 1 and 2b are not hypothetical or fictional, but autobiographical, and seen as 'a reported account of past events' as lived and perceived by them, in their own subjectivity that are rich with life-likeness (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). As a narrative inquiry researcher, I trust that the narratives are descriptively accurate accounts as 'real' events. Similarly, for both cohorts, 'narrative' is defined in terms of having the prototypical definition criteria (e.g. temporal ordering of events). This means that both cohorts have narratives with the same chronological sequencing of events (see Section 3.1.4).

However, the main difference between the cohorts is that the 'narratives' for cohort 1 are written by NS of English and the 'narratives' for cohort 2b are written by NNS of English. Therefore, two different approaches to defining what is 'a narrative' from narrative inquiry theory is adopted, to include the diversity in narratives from different cultural perspectives and from different English language competency levels.

### **3.1.3.1 'Narrative' in cohort 1**

The 'narratives' for cohort 1 are written by NS of English. The approach I used for the teachers' narratives made sense of 'the whole journey' the teachers underwent. Their stories are written from a retrospective viewpoint after their journey is complete, and are subjected to the process that Moen (2006) described as follows:

'First, in the dialogic collaboration process between the researcher and the research subject, one or more stories are written down and become fixed in a text. This means that the narrative in question is no longer tied to the moment in which it occurred. Second, by fixing the narrative into a text it becomes 'autonomised': It has been detached from the moment it occurred and has assumed consequences of its own. Third, the narrative can, in this way, assume importance that goes beyond the initial situation and becomes relevant in other contexts' Moen (2006, p.62).

Therefore, the written narratives in this study relate to various other earlier works that describe aspects of the narratives such as 'translating knowing into telling' (White, 1981), giving meaning to events (Gergen and Gergen, 1993) and how they 'distance themselves' reflectively from the events (Moore and Carling, 1988). The narratives in my study are privileged with a certain kind of 'unified, coherent, autonomous, reflected upon and rehearsed self within a restrictive view of

narrative' as opposed to 'a version of life given in a particular moment' (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 129). The narratives of NS teachers were expected to be longer, more descriptive and possibly extend the narrative frames to encompass the 'completed journey'.

### **3.1.3.2 'Narrative' in cohort 2b**

I used the same narrative frame to make the narratives in cohort 1 and cohort 2b comparable, giving the same flexibility to write 'the whole journey' the learners underwent as with the teachers. For cohort 2b, because the narratives are written by non-native English speakers, I take into consideration other types of narratives as this cohort expressed itself differently to cohort 1. Some of the cohort 2b narratives are shorter than the teachers' NS narratives, but they are no less valuable. In my study, a produced 'narrative', regardless of length or confined to the narrative frame, is a complete story whether as 'a plotline' of lived experience (Georgakopoulou, 2006) or in sharing 'fleeting moments' of narrativity (Hymes, 1996).

'A 'narrative' can consist of mainly declarative statements and expositions, with some sentences that invoked fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world' (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 123).

Therefore, I chose narrative inquiry theory because it gives importance to 'small stories', not just focussing on the 'big story' (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b; Georgakopoulou and Bamberg, 2005; Georgakopoulou, 2006).

### **3.1.4 Narrative frame in this study**

The narrative frame in this study was based on the temporal restrictions of Labov's work on event structure (Labov, 1972, 2003). The narrative frame in this study was, therefore, conventionally tied to a narrative plot. It was influenced by three key aspects of the socio-linguistically oriented model, as shown below (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972, 1981; Labov and Fanshel, 1977 as cited in Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 123):

- orientation (gives details of time, persons, place, situation)
- complication (the main event sequence)
- evaluation (highlights the point to make meaning or reveal the storyteller's attitude after the experience)

The narrative frame is 'a plotline' that encompassed a beginning (before), a middle (during), and an end (after), which conveyed a particular perspective (Ochs and Capps, 2001, cited in Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 124).

#### **3.1.4.1 Narrative frame for teacher cohort 1**

The structure of the 'narrative frame' needs further justification. I devised this narrative frame based on Kumazawa's (2013) research design, which explores three temporal stages of EFL teachers' experience. Kumazawa's (2013) research explored the pre-service possible-selves, I recognised an important link with my study. Her study helped devise a frame that would uncover teachers' attitudes, perceptions and motivation in three different stages in the process of 'acculturation' (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005; Neilson, 2011).

The narrative frame of the teacher cohort 1 was structured to investigate: the 'pre-service teacher perception' (i.e. before moving to KSA); the 'in-service' experience of adapting to living and working in Saudi HEI (i.e. during the experience); and the 'post-service' phase after they left KSA (i.e. after the experience). Therefore, the frame explores their pre-service teacher motivations (stage one); their actual teaching experience (stage two); and one-year after completing their teaching position (stage three). I now describe each stage in detail.

### **1) Stage one: 'before'**

The western women EFL teachers in my study were all experienced EFL teachers but had not taught in the Saudi context before; in a sense, they were 'novice' EFL teachers to this teaching context. It is obvious that the teachers would not be considered 'novice' teachers if it was not for the Saudi EFL context being so strikingly different from any previous EFL experiences they may have had. For recruitment purposes, they had completed a minimum of one academic year of teaching experience in a Saudi HEI.

This relates to the possible 'culture shock' in the 'pre-service' phase to unfamiliar settings, as I described earlier (see Section 1.4.5). However, in order not to skew the findings by co-producing a narrative frame that overtly draws on these concepts, I made the narrative frame as neutral as possible, focussing on gap-filling factual information for each teacher and only asking the reason(s) she chose to relocate to KSA in the final sentence. I hoped this would be expanded by the teacher and encompass the reason, i.e. motivation for teaching English in KSA.

Figure 9 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'pre-service' stage

#### **Before**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ (number) years old. I have been a teacher for \_\_\_\_\_ (number) years. I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (country of origin). I have lived in \_\_\_\_\_ (different culture(s) and \_\_\_\_\_ (one/many places). I have teaching experience in \_\_\_\_\_ (country/countries). I taught in Saudi Arabia from \_\_\_\_\_ (month –year) to \_\_\_\_\_ (month-year). I chose to relocate to KSA because \_\_\_\_\_ (one/many reasons).

### **2) Stage two: 'during'**

The second stage of Kumazawa's (2013) study investigated teachers' experience in the 'reality' of the teaching job. As my second research aim explores the 'in-service' experience of western women EFL teachers working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs, I modelled the second stage on the teaching reality (i.e. in the classroom, the day-to-day activities, the workload and expectations of being a teacher). In this stage, Kumazawa's study (2013) documented any 'incongruence' between the 'pre-service ideal self' and the 'current self-concept'. 'Incongruence' refers to a difference between the pre-service stage and the in-service stage. In my study, this meant, the incongruence between 'what she envisioned' her teaching experience would be like, and her 'actual experience' of teaching. Kumazawa's study (2013) documented the 'ideal self-concept', referring



to 'what she hoped' to achieve by teaching Saudi women in HE in KSA. I thought this theoretical tool could explore the teaching reality of the Saudi HEI teaching, but also the teachers' attitudes and perceptions, especially using her terms of 'identity crisis', 'self-survival' and identity 'gaps' as useful references in the discussion of my findings. Similarly, with the 'pre-service' stage, the narrative frame mainly consisted of neutral gap-filling of factual information for each teacher but also describes feeling(s), attribute adjectives and explanations, as can be seen from Figure 10.

Figure 10 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'in-service' stage

**During**

I was employed in \_\_\_\_\_ an institution/ university/ private school in Saudi Arabia. \_\_\_\_\_ (keep institute name anonymous) \_\_\_\_\_ type of teaching) I immediately liked/disliked \_\_\_\_\_. When I arrived, I found that \_\_\_\_\_ (your perception after settling in) cultural aspects were different, for example, \_\_\_\_\_. As a western woman I felt \_\_\_\_\_ (describe initial feelings about living in KSA) Other western teachers told me (other people's impression of living in KSA) But for me, the main challenge was rather \_\_\_\_\_ (aspect of lifestyle you found different/difficult) \_\_\_\_\_. Living in Saudi was overall \_\_\_\_\_ I enjoyed. As a English language teacher, I taught language level(s) \_\_\_\_\_ (IELTS band or EU framework) I had classes with about \_\_\_\_\_ (number) students and I worked \_\_\_\_\_ (amount) hours a week (describe each academic year(s) \_\_\_\_\_ over time) In the beginning \_\_\_\_\_ (describe feelings in initial stages of teaching experience). I found teaching my Saudi students to be \_\_\_\_\_ (describe setting and interaction) Over time I learnt \_\_\_\_\_ to improve my teaching skills. I think it is important to be \_\_\_\_\_ with your students. I really liked \_\_\_\_\_. I found the teaching experience in Saudi different/similar to teaching \_\_\_\_\_. Overall, I can say that I \_\_\_\_\_. I remember one time, \_\_\_\_\_ (interesting insights/situations that surprised you) This situation taught me so much because \_\_\_\_\_

**3) Stage three: 'after'**

The narrative derives autobiographical data from a position of retrospective analysis and distance from the time and place of the events, or 'reportability' (Labov, 1970). It was necessary that each narrative was written after the teacher finished teaching in a Saudi HEI. This stage addresses my third research aim which is to explore the 'post-service' reasons behind the low retention rate of western women EFL teachers working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs.

Kumazawa's (2013) study is particularly insightful and relevant because of the term, 'renegotiated self-concept' (i.e. rediscovery of goals at a higher level of consciousness, regaining their motivation as teachers). This is an important contribution to previous conceptualisations, as it shows the dynamic non-fixed nature of Possible Selves as constantly interacting with experience. This relates to van Lier's work showing the cycles of 'perception, action and interpretation' that the 'ideal teacher self' is constantly renegotiated, based on 'teaching experience' and the teacher's perception of that experience. It helps the teacher interpret their role in teaching based on more realistic expectations, and thus produces a new 'future teacher self'. In my study, this stage focussed on the sociocultural changes after teaching, in terms of their perceptions and attitudes towards Saudi culture. I expected the narrative frame would elicit 'renegotiation' of a teacher's cognisance or mindset, which would be relevant. Yet, the frame

had to be neutral, and not draw too directly on related sociocultural issues underlying the study, as Figure 11 below shows.

Figure 11 Cohort 1 narrative frame excerpt: 'post-service' stage

**After**

What I learnt from my experience was (one word) I left in \_\_\_\_\_ (date) because (reason(s)) \_\_\_\_\_. After living there for \_\_\_\_\_ (number) years/months I really feel \_\_\_\_\_ when I think about the country. My understanding about Saudi women was \_\_\_\_\_ but after this experience I think \_\_\_\_\_. From the Saudi women who I met, I learnt that \_\_\_\_\_ Saudi women are \_\_\_\_\_ (describe your perspective of gender issues in Saudi) My teaching experience in KSA was interesting because it showed me \_\_\_\_\_. If I could give advice to female western women going to teach there, I would say \_\_\_\_\_

**3.1.4.2 Narrative frame for learner cohort 2b**

The narrative frame developed for learner cohort 2b was based on the same structure as Kumazawa's (2013) research design I used for teacher cohort 1. Likewise, the narrative frame for the Saudi EFL learner cohort 2b has a plotline that encompasses a beginning (before), a middle (during), and an end (after). The narrative frame of cohort 2b was structured to investigate the 'learner motivation' before learning English. Then it explored their experiences during their L2 acquisition in Saudi HEI and the 'after', exploring how L2 learners perceive themselves after achieving language fluency.

**1) Stage one: 'before'**

An aim of my study is to explore the reasons for learning English, i.e. 'learner motivation' of Saudi women EFL learners in KSA, and what English competence means for Saudi women within the Saudi society.

The 2b narrative derives similar autobiographical data as cohort 1, i.e. from a position of retrospective analysis or 'reportability' (Labov, 1970), as mentioned earlier. It was necessary that each learner wrote the narrative after she finished learning English in the respective foundation programmes in her Saudi HEI. The narrative frame was devised as neutrally as possible, focussing on gap-filling factual information for each learner and only asking the reason(s) she chose to learn English in the final sentence. I hoped this would be expanded by the teacher and encompass the reason, i.e. motivation for learning English in KSA.

Figure 12 Cohort 2b narrative frame excerpt: 'Before' learning English

**Before**

I am \_\_\_\_\_ (number) years old. I have been an English language learner for \_\_\_\_\_ (number) years. I am from \_\_\_\_\_ (country of origin). I have have/not travelled outside Saudi Arabia (explain) \_\_\_\_\_ or places). I have learnt English in \_\_\_\_\_ (school/university/travelling) I went to school in Saudi Arabia from \_\_\_\_\_ (month-year) to \_\_\_\_\_ (month-year). In school I studied English because \_\_\_\_\_ (one/many reasons).

**2) Stage two: 'during'**

Another aim of this study was to explore Saudi women EFL learners' experience of learning English in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs and examine to what extent, or if at all, English is perceived by Saudi women as a 'threat' to their culture and a vehicle for westernisation in their lives. I modelled the second stage on the

learning reality (i.e in the classroom, the day-to-day activities, the workload and expectations of being a student in an EFL class in a Saudi HEI). It was necessary that each narrative was written after the student finished learning English in the respective foundation programmes in her Saudi HEI. The frame was co-constructed to elicit 'the reality' of the Saudi EFL classroom, and the level of 'cultural sensitivity' during the contact hours with a western teacher. This section was aimed at understanding collective L2 experience of cultural issues and elicit any incongruence between official regulations (see Section 1.4.3) and actual 'teaching practice'. Similarly, with the 'during' stage, the narrative frame consisted of gap-filling of opinions for each learner encouraging them to describe feelings, attribute adjectives and provide explanations, as can be seen from Figure 13.

Figure 13 Cohort 2b narrative frame excerpt: 'during' stage

During
<p>I was a student in an institution/ university/ private school in Saudi Arabia (circle your choice and explain) ____ As an English language learner at university, I started at language level ____ (IELTS band or EU framework) I had classes with about (number) students and I studied English (amount) ____ hours a week. In the beginning, I found learning at university to be ____ (explain) I found learning with my Western teacher to be ____ (explain) I found learning the university English resources to be ____ (describe). My language skills improved / didn't improve (circle your choice and explain) ____ . With a Western teacher you should be (describe how you behave). I really liked/ didn't like learning English at university because ____ (explain) I really liked/ didn't like the learning experience with a Western teacher (circle your choice and explain). I had a Western teacher from ____ and she was ____ years old. She was ____ (describe her attitude, her teaching style, her appearance, her interests). She lived in before coming to KSA. My Western teacher talked / didn't talk about her culture (circle your choice and explain) ____ I immediately liked/disliked my teacher (circle your choice and explain) ____ I remember one time, in class ____ (interesting situation that surprised you). This situation taught me so much because ____ (explain) With the Saudi learners in the class she was ____ (describe her cultural attitude) My teacher thought Saudi Arabia was ____ (explain) ____ My teacher thought living in Saudi Arabia was ____ (explain) From what I could tell, my teacher enjoyed/ didn't enjoy her experience in Saudi Arabia. (circle your choice and explain) I remember once in class, my teacher told us a story, ____ (describe). I remember this story because When I started learning English in class, I found that teaching was different/ wasn't different to my previous experience ____ (circle your choice and explain) ____ . My Western teacher understands/ doesn't understand KSA (circle your choice and explain) ____ My teacher asked / didn't ask about my life (circle your choice and explain) ____ As a Western woman, my teacher was different/similar to me (circle your choice and explain) ____ . Other westerner/ teachers said they think KSA is ____ (explain) . I think the main challenge for Western women living in KSA is ____ (explain) The aspect of lifestyle that my teacher found different/difficult was ____ In my free time I enjoy/like; I don't enjoy/like ____ (explain) In my free time I use/ don't use English (circle your choice and explain) ____ .</p>

### 3) Stage three: 'after'

Similarly, cohort 2b focussed on the sociocultural changes after learning English, in terms of their perceptions and attitudes towards English, their western teachers and different cultures. My study focusses on the sociocultural changes after acquiring English, and I hoped the narrative frame would elicit any 'renegotiation' of a learner's 'mindset' and attitudes that would be relevant. Yet, the frame had to be neutral, and not draw directly on related sociocultural issues underlying the study, as with the narratives for cohort 1. Figure 14 shows how the frame draws on related feelings, opinions and sociocultural perspectives underlying the study.

Figure 14 Cohort 2b narrative frame: 'after' learning English in a Saudi HEI

**After**

*What I learnt from my English teacher was \_\_\_\_\_ (one word) I finished my English course in \_\_\_\_\_ (date) because \_\_\_\_\_ (reason(s)) I learnt English for (number) \_\_\_\_\_ years/months with the Western teacher/s.  
How do I feel about myself, now, that I speak English fluently? \_\_\_\_\_ (explain) I feel happy / unhappy about my level of English (circle your choice and explain) \_\_\_\_\_ From the Western teachers who I met, I learnt that Western teachers are \_\_\_\_\_ (explain). My learning experience was interesting/not interesting \_\_\_\_\_ (circle your choice and explain) If I could give advice to female western women coming to teach here in Saudi Arabia, I would say \_\_\_\_\_ (explain)*

### **3.1.5 Interview methods**

The interview approach was influenced by narrative inquiry methodology, where the interviews, sometimes referred to as 'oral narratives', are conducted between a researcher and participant as a conversation. Interviews, therefore, are relatively unstructured when compared, for example, to questionnaires (Hosking, 2004). 'Part of the inquirer's intention is to 'get out of the way' of what the other person wants to say (...) to encourage a conversation of equals' (Hosking, 2004, p. 18). The narrative discourse via speech is then transcribed into writing, and it forms part of the larger comparative narrative record (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990).

My study comprises five semi-structured narrative interviews for the Saudi women EFL learners of cohort 2b. I devised the frame (see Figure 15) as to initiate conversation, but intended to adopt this oral narrative approach:

'The interviewer generally leaves space for the interviewee to tell their story in relation to some broad question, such as 'could you tell me about.../ let's talk about...', as a way to initiate the discourse' (Hosking, 2004, p. 18).

Similar to the written narrative frames, the participants of the qualitative semi-structured interviews were given 'preparation time' (Georgakopoulou, 2006). The semi-structured interview frame was sent ahead of the meeting so the interviewees could cognitively engage in the content and prepare their 'rehearsed' story but then converse more freely as they wished. Not all the prompts were used, and the conversation was led by the interviewee.

Figure 15 Excerpt of interview: Cohort 2a

**I. Let's talk about English...**

- Have you travelled to any English-speaking countries? Where would you like to go? Why?
- How do you feel about English as a language?
- Is English as important as your native language, Arabic, for you personally?
- Can you tell me the role is English playing in Saudi Arabia?
- Is English *more than a language* for Saudis?

## 3.2 Ethical considerations

The research was ratified twice by the official ethics board of the Open University, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical issues in conducting this study were reviewed, and the required HREC forms (proformas of informed consent) completed. The ethical clearance forms described the specific measures undertaken before data collection was authorised in order to prevent any risk or discomfort to the participants or the researcher. The Informed Consent forms were reviewed and approved once all the specifics were fully described and met international HE ethical standards (see Appendices 6, 7); consequently, the official clearance to conduct the study was obtained (see Appendices 8, 9):

- HREC\_2015-1791-Waterkeyn-1
- HREC\_2015-1791-Waterkeyn-2

The HREC regulations outlined in the Ethical Report were implemented in both the initial and main study. The interviews, narratives and subsequent treatment of data were managed according to the ethical clearance guidelines stipulating privacy and confidentiality, and all the data were encrypted once collected. I provided one full narrative (cohort 1) and one semi-structured interview (cohort 2a) for examination but these were redacted for ethical considerations (see Appendices 16-18).

### 3.2.1 Participant recruitment challenges

My experience of conducting qualitative research on women in HE in KSA was challenged by similar issues as reported in previous Saudi studies on women in HE (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005; Alamri, 2011). 'Hard to reach populations require special treatment in research efforts because they cannot be approached by conventional means' (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005, p. 229). It was difficult to approach the cohorts by conventional means, because of ethical considerations; all the teachers had left KSA. This may influence the data collected as I could not access teachers working at Saudi HEIs at the time of the study. There was little I could do to mitigate this issue, but, nonetheless, this study sheds light on past 'teaching experiences' of women in HE in KSA.

Likewise, as the snowballing sampling technique is often criticised for being unsystematic in representation. This sampling technique was used because I could not access the Saudi women EFL learners in my classroom. For cohort 2a and 2b, participants willingly participated in social research because they knew each other.

### 3.2.2 Risks to western women EFL teachers

Each western teacher in cohort 1 was no longer employed at a Saudi HEI or residing in KSA at the time of this study because it was considered a risk to the participant if she was still employed at a Saudi HEI when she disclosed her personal experiences. Only teachers who were no longer residing in KSA were recruited. The anonymity of their Saudi HEI and workplace was carefully maintained throughout the research process. Each western teacher was given full information concerning the research, its aims, and possible risks. Every

participant signed the Cohort 1 Informed Consent form (Appendix 6) that provided full information about the study and the right to withdraw through itemised procedures, which was returned via email. Every narrative frame was sent after the consent form was received. Participants could opt out of research as per the conditions of the HREC proforma and informed consent regulations. This sufficiently protected them from any research risks. Applying this ethical consideration allowed the participants more freedom of expression and objectivity, and it enabled them to candidly disclose their experience (see Appendices 6, 8, 9).

### ***3.2.3 Risks to Saudi women EFL learners***

Each Saudi learner in the study willingly participated in the sociocultural research. As she was not analysing a workplace as an employee but rather her own learning experience of learning English with a western FL, it was not considered a risk that she was residing in KSA at the time of the study. Nonetheless, her Saudi HEI was not named to protect her anonymity in the study. The research was conducted anonymously, confidentially, and according to the Saudi cultural sensitivities, which is opposed to video recording of women, respecting privacy and gender-segregation. The learners were recruited through a snowball sampling technique. The participants were provided full information regarding the research, its aims and withdrawal procedures. Learners were carefully informed, and I checked their L2 understanding of the study's outline. I sent the interview and narrative frames to prevent discomfort. Each learner signed the HREC approved Informed Consent Form (Appendix 7) for cohort 2. Participants were asked again to give their permission in the interviews at the beginning of each voice recording (see Appendices 7, 8, 9).

### ***3.2.4 Risks to the researcher***

Throughout the time of the research, I was working in a Saudi HEI. The risks for western women participants previously discussed (see Section 3.2.2) also applied to the researcher of the present study. The participants were informed through the consent forms that I was a western woman EFL teacher-researcher; however, I kept my position at my Saudi HEI confidential. I considered how to maintain sufficient researcher distance as we may have shared the same pool of acquaintances, so I chose not to conduct follow-up interviews with the participants (see Section 3.3.2).

### ***3.2.5 Language used for data collection***

English was the only language used in conducting the research. The Saudi participants recruited had upper-intermediate English fluency and agreed to participate in English only. This facilitated the process of data collection. Nothing was interpreted or translated into Arabic; this is an area for criticism and is discussed in the limitations (see Section 7.5.5).

### ***3.2.6 Funding and conflict of interests***

Financial disclosure was submitted to HREC in the Ethical Report. There was no external funding for this study. As a doctoral study, it was entirely self-funded. The AOUG acceptance conditions of the Ted Castle Bursary Award 2016, which I

received during my studies, stipulated that it be allocated towards personal development as a researcher (see Acknowledgements).

### **3.3 Reflexivity**

In qualitative research, subjectivity influences the process of devising the aims and questions, data collection and the interpretation of findings. This study is further complicated by a multiple researcher role because it explores the intercultural dynamic between East and West, between Saudi and non-Saudi groups. The importance of reflexivity in research is, therefore, evident.

#### **3.3.1 Researcher reflexivity overview**

In consideration of the simplest level of researcher reflexivity – self-reference (Harvey, 2012–19) – the socio-political backdrop of this study is particularly important. The fact that I am British, a westerner, a native speaker of English, and a woman influences my mindset and, therefore, my researcher's lens. This problem is not altogether new in the historical pursuit of academic study in the Arab world, especially by European scholars in the Middle East. Said (1978) asserted:

‘No one has ever devised a method for detaching the scholar from the circumstances of life, from the fact of his involvement (conscious or unconscious) with class, a set of beliefs, a social position or from the mere activity of being a member of that society’ (Said, 1978, p. 10).

While being ‘an outsider’ in so many respects, interestingly, I can be considered ‘an insider’ as well, given that I am an EFL teacher, a western woman like the participants in cohort 1, a member of HEI faculty and by living in KSA, part of a community. Hockey (1993, p. 199) described that the advantage of being an insider is ‘having good rapport and communication with the participants as well as receiving more intimate details’. Especially when conducting research on hard to reach populations, ‘participant recruitment needs strong social ties’ (AlKhatani et al., 2005). This combination of being both is an advantage (Hammersley, 1993) because of the enhanced ability to explain the ‘researched’ with both empathy and distance (Hellawell, 2006). A more advanced layer of reflexivity refers to the process of *reflecting on* rather than just reflecting as an activity in and of itself (Harvey, 2012). I had to reflect on how that would affect my research tools and how I conducted the research.

#### **3.3.2 Critique of research methods in this study**

In consideration of a more complex level of researcher reflexivity, I now analyse how I could have improved the research methods.

I did not replicate research tools but devised my own because, at the time, I could not find similar scholarly studies with the same methodology on both cohorts (teachers and learners) in the context of Saudi HEIs in KSA. Nonetheless, I addressed this issue in the piloting phase prior to the initial study (See Figure 12) by working through diverse drafts of the narrative frames. I also tested different sentence completion prompts and interpretation from different cultural standpoints. I tested these with western and Saudi acquaintances in constructing

the narrative frames and interview questions before using them. I then tested the research tools in the initial study, but it was tested on just one participant from each cohort. If I had had a bigger cohort in the initial study, I could have refined the research tools still further.

I constructed a narrative frame based on my experience as a reflective practitioner. The skeletal outline of the story was context-based, but it was difficult to reduce researcher bias in the stage of constructing the frame. Narrative inquiry is often criticised for the issue of co-construction. It is possible, when using narrative inquiry as a methodology, to adopt a particular 'narrative view of experience' as phenomena under study (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006, p. 477). I intentionally limited the possible free-expression or creative writing in the process, which was justified for practical reasons. The narrative frames must guide the writing, thereby standardising the plot of each story so that it can be more systematically compared between participants. The narratives, however, in this way, were constrained by the researcher's guidelines of 'what a narrative is' according to the researcher. From the stage of inventing the narrative frame to receiving the completed narrative, the researcher is 'a co-producer' of the narrative (Clandinin and Connelly, 2006). My frame, therefore, elicited 'a type of story' from the participants according to the sentence completion prompt, which required filling in information from the narrator. This was intended to prompt the participant to expand the story, but in retrospect, it could have also defined the direction and the 'reportability choices' in the storytelling process, through research acquiescence, participants could have written the 'story I wanted to read'. Critiques claim personal experience can be manipulated to meet social norms, researcher expectations or to create representations of the storyteller's identity (Barkhuizen et al., 2013).

I did not replicate a semi-structured interview frame from previous studies in this research context, but, again, devised my own. I was not experienced in oral narrative techniques that could have improved my interview approach. My frame possibly elicited 'a type of story' from the participant according to the semi-closed questions rather than a more open 'conversation' (Hosking, 2004).

I did not use a mixed-method quantitative approach in my study, as quantitative methods were not possible without authorisation. However, I could have easily conducted follow-up interviews. From a theoretical position, a follow-up interview after the narrative inquiries would have helped strengthen the research design. It could have expanded on some of the narratives by Saudi participants. However, there was an important ethical reason behind avoiding follow-up interviews. I wished to maintain as much confidentiality and anonymity as possible (see Section 3.2). I considered how maintaining sufficient researcher distance would have been particularly challenging in a follow-up interview. The use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for qualitative interviewing, while increasingly popular, can render the interviews less formal. I would have found it difficult to steer the interview focus away from the gossip about the shared pool of acquaintances or maintain anonymity about the Saudi HEI where I was working. For consistency, I



chose not to conduct follow-up interviews with the Saudi women participants, as it would have complicated the data analysis.

### **3.4 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I initially explained the research methodology, justifying why I chose a qualitative study with a narrative inquiry approach. I explained what constitutes 'a narrative' in this study and I gave extracts of the frames I used for both the narratives and the interviews. I incorporated details of how I managed certain cultural restrictions and challenges unique to the research setting. In this chapter, I gave priority to the various ethical considerations I faced in the process. I included the ethical clearance documents in the appendices for further review (see Appendices 6, 7, 8, 9). I chose to include a section solely on reflexivity in this chapter, as I thought it to be most pertinent for an insider-outsider researcher to demonstrate awareness of research bias and certain limitations in an unfamiliar research setting.

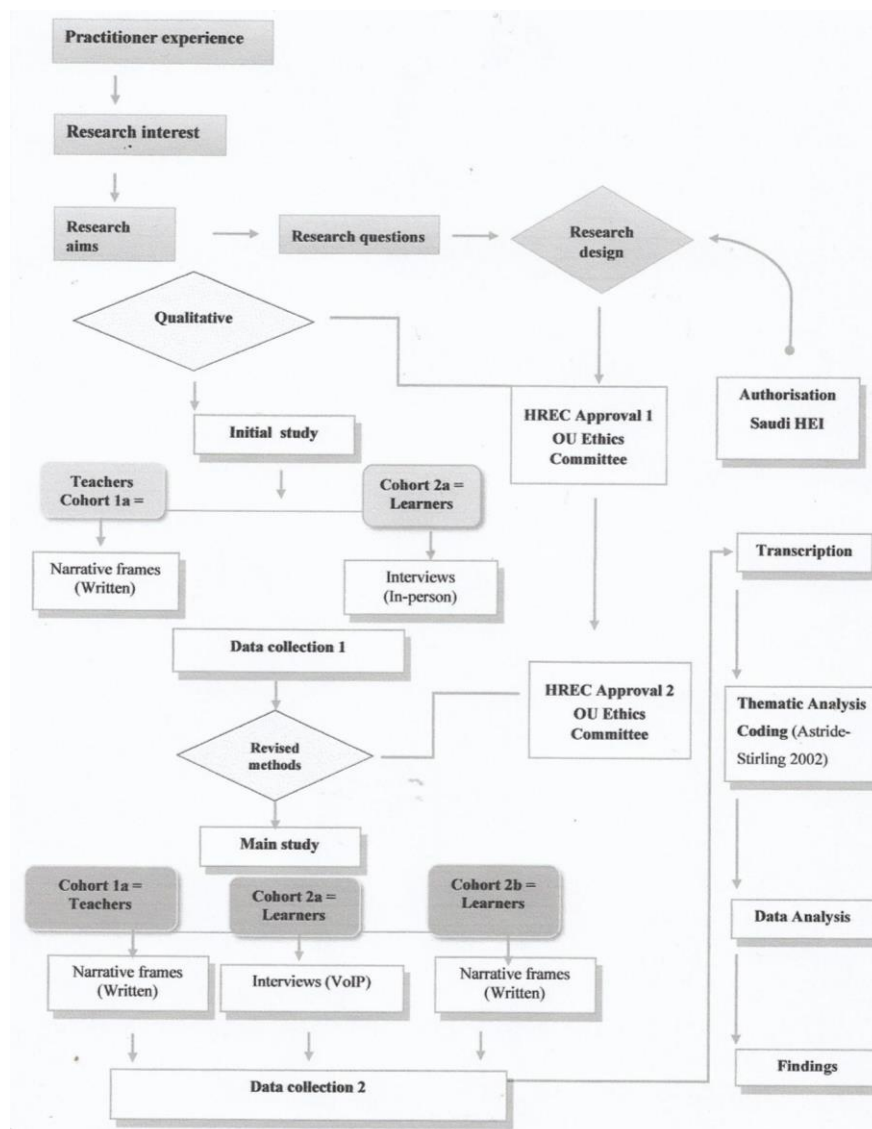
## Chapter 4 Data Collection

This chapter starts with an overview of the research in the form of a flow diagram (Figure 16) and a timeframe of the study (Table 5). The chapter describes the recruitment processes. It outlines the profile criterion on which the selection of participants for teacher and learner cohorts was made and explains the participant selection processes. It then details each participant's profile for teacher cohort 1, learner cohort 2a and learner cohort 2b. It distinguishes the process of data collection into two stages: the initial study and the main study. There is additional clarification on the extra data collected, the treatment of data and the transcription conventions used in the study. The total amount of data is summarised at the end of the chapter.

### 4.1 Research Process

This section presents a flow chart of the research process (see Figure 16) as a schematic overview of the entire research process undertaken, from its conception to its completion.

Figure 16 Flow chart: Chronology of the research process



## 4.2 Timeframe for the research

This section gives a more detailed account of the research activities according to a Gantt chart (Table 5). This section serves to anchor the research study within a specified timeframe, thereby documenting the socio-historic aspects of the context, as many social and political reforms happened in KSA from 2013 to 2018 for women in HE. Thus, this timeframe helps further research.

Table 5 Gantt chart of research activities

Research Activities	2013	2014 Year 1				2015 Year 2				2016 Year 3				2017 Year 4				2018
Yearly Quarters (Q)		Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	
Relocated as a teacher-researcher	X																	
Research conception	X																	
Research proposal	X																	
Research design		X	X	X	X	X												
Research aims & questions		X	X	X	X	X												
Authorisation request		X	X	X	X													
Ethical clearance				X	X			X	X									
Piloting the narrative frames		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X									
Piloting the interview questions		X	X	X	X													
Literature review	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Data Collection 1: Initial study</b>																		
<b>Teacher Cohort 1</b>																		
1 Narrative frame (written)				X														
<b>Learner Cohort 2a</b>																		
1 Interview (in person)				X														
<b>Data Collection 2: Main study</b>																		
<b>Teacher Cohort 1</b>																		
7 Narrative frames (written)										X	X							
<b>Learner Cohort 2a</b>																		
4 Interviews (VoIP)								X	X									
<b>Learner Cohort 2b</b>																		
4 Narrative frames (written)										X	X							
<b>Extra data (Cohort 2b)</b>																		
- 4 Narrative frames (written)												X	X					
Transcription of interviews						X		X	X	X								
Coding & data analysis								X	X	X		X	X					
Interpretation of findings														X	X			
Conclusions & recommendations														X	X	X		
Writing up thesis		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

## 4.3 Western women EFL teacher cohort 1

### 4.3.1 Recruitment process of teacher cohort 1

I was a female researcher in this gender-segregated environment (see Section 1.3.3.4), so the recruitment process was challenging. As explained in the ethical

considerations (see Section 3.2.1), the snowball sampling technique was used because I could not access my workplace for ethical reasons. While this method is particularly useful for 'hard to reach' Saudi faculty members, it was also useful for those participants who had already left KSA and resided in different geographical locations. They were contacted through the professional network of ex-teachers and acquaintances, as I could not access colleagues in my workplace due to the same ethical considerations mentioned earlier. Twenty western teachers were invited via email. However, it was difficult to find a sufficient number of teachers who met the criteria outlined below. Only eight western women EFL teachers were eligible to participate. It is a non-probability sampling technique, which means it is subject to criticism. It does not give the researcher much control over sampling or representation.

#### 4.3.2 Profile criteria of teacher cohort 1

The profile criteria items were important to select experienced teachers to provide an insightful, mature analysis of living and working in KSA. I tried to reduce the variable of teaching inexperience as much as possible. However, this created a generational difference between the two cohorts. The average age for the teacher cohort, was 50 years old, whereas, for the learner cohort, it was 20 years old. This significant age difference may have affected the data. Teacher cohort 1 was selected based on the criteria below.

Figure 17 Profile criteria: Western women EFL teachers

<p><b>1. Gender, age, marital status:</b> Only female teachers Specified age group (40–65 years). Irrespective of marital status.</p> <p><b>2. Nationality, religion:</b> Representative of different nationalities to avoid bias and increase representation Representative of diverse English-speaking countries Not be asked to disclose their exact religion but indicate if Muslim or non-Muslim.</p> <p><b>3. Well-travelled, experienced professionals:</b> The participants should have extensive experience in adapting to non-western cultures 6+ years of EFL teaching experience Teaching experience of diverse EFL placements prior to KSA Demonstrate adaptability to other non-western environments</p> <p><b>4. Recent teaching experience in gender-segregated HEIs in Saudi Arabia:</b> In order to standardise the experience of Saudi culture, regarding exposure to Islamic customs and adherence to Shari'ah law: Participants should be selected only if they have lived in KSA as EFL teachers in a female-only HEIs for an extended period (minimum one year). In order to standardise the teaching experience and to draw on enough teaching experience to make a reportable narrative and provide insight into the nuances in working in a Saudi HEI (i.e. teaching approaches to EFL; experience in working with Saudi EFL management). The participants should be standardised in their EFL teaching experience with Saudi HEI curricula. A minimum of a year of accumulated pedagogic experience with EFL learners of a similar age group (18–25 years)</p> <p><b>5. Criteria checklist</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Should no longer be living or working in a Saudi HEI</li> <li>- Should have recently left KSA (within 6 months).</li> <li>- Should be living in their home country or abroad at the time of data collection</li> <li>- Should be able to reflect on the completed journey without discomfort and report any personal experience candidly from a retrospective standpoint,</li> </ul> <p>Specify: Resigned / non-renewal / terminated contracts</p>
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### 4.3.3 Participant profile for western women EFL teachers

Below is an itemised description of the western teachers recruited in the present study. I included ten categories in columns to provide sufficient background information for teacher demographical and motivational information for relocating to KSA and for leaving.

Table 6 Profile of cohort 1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>Winifred T(NP1)</b>	57	New Zealand	<b>NM</b>	S	13	Australia, UK, Switzerland, China, Korea	N	- Job security - Cultural Interest - Salary	Resigned – teacher discontent
<b>Annabel T(NP2)</b>	49	England	<b>NM</b>	M	14	England, Germany	N	- Cultural Interest - Salary - Job security - Family support - Adventure	Resigned – family reasons
<b>Jean T(NP3)</b>	43	America	<b>NM</b>	S	9	Czech. Rep., Japan, Chile, S. Korea, Turkey	N	- Salary - Retirement plan - Job security - Cultural Interest	Non-renewal – teacher discontent
<b>Joanna T(NP4)</b>	57	Scotland	<b>NM</b>	S	30	Italy, Turkey, India,	N	- Salary - Retirement plans - Cultural Interest	Resigned – teacher discontent
<b>Jane T(NP5)</b>	40	Canada	<b>NM</b>	S	14	Italy, S. Korea, China, Brazil, Malaysia, UK, Oman	Y	- Job security - Family support - Adventure	Resigned – teacher discontent
<b>Kamilla T(NP6)</b>	54	Canada	<b>NM</b>	S	15	China, South Africa, Canada	N	- Life change - Feminism - Cultural Interest	Contact terminated
<b>Shelley T(NP7)</b>	49	America	<b>NM</b>	S	15	Germany, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Mexico	N	- Salary - Cultural Interest	Resigned – teacher discontent
<b>Cynthia T(NP8)</b>	62	England	<b>NM</b>	S	12	Taiwan, England	N	- Cultural Interest - Arabic - Adventure	Resigned – teacher discontent

#### Column Description

- 1 Code and pseudonyms: Teacher (T) Narrative (N) Participant Number; e.g. T(NP1)
- 2 Age (disclosed at the time of the study)
- 3 Country of origin
- 4 Religion: (M = Muslim; NM = Non-Muslim)
- 5 Marital Status: (Married = M; Single = S)
- 6 EFL (yrs.) = Years of teaching experience
- 7 Researcher's notes on personal journey of teaching English, EFL (Placement) in different cultures
- 8 Researcher's notes on Middle Eastern experience Y = yes N = No
- 9 Researcher's notes on pre-service teacher motivation
- 10 Researcher's notes on reason (s) for leaving KSA

## 4.4 Saudi women EFL learner cohorts 2a + 2b

### 4.4.1 Recruitment process: learners

In my experience recruitment for qualitative research in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs is time-consuming, unpredictable, and challenging. Saudi females in HEIs in Saudi Arabia meet the definition of 'a hard to reach population' (Al-Kahtani et al. 2005, p.229). Saudi women were as hard to reach as previous studies suggest. However, this was made easier by being a female researcher and having a network of Saudi acquaintances after living there for four years. As I had an infant attending a Saudi playschool, conducting the study through social contacts was easier. I was able to contact female Saudi women, as a mother and as a woman, despite gender-segregated environments. It is difficult to access male foreign faculty members in this EFL context because of the ethical risks associated. Therefore, the scope was limited to Saudi women only. Twenty-five Saudi women were invited to participate via WhatsApp, or verbally in person; eight agreed to the narrative inquiry writing and four to the interviews.

### 4.4.2 Profile criteria: learners

The cohorts of Saudi EFL learners 2a and 2b were selected based on the following criteria.

Figure 18 Profile criteria: Saudi women EFL learners

**1. Gender, age, marital status:**

Only female learners  
Specified age group (18–25 years)  
irrespective of marital status.

**2. Nationality, religion:**

Nationality should be restricted to Saudi learners with their mother tongue being Arabic, but not necessarily consist of similar regions of Saudi Arabia  
However, within the homogeneous cultural sample, representation should be increased by diverse socio-economic backgrounds and tribal (family) status

**3. Recent learning experience in a gender-segregated HEI in Saudi Arabia:**

In order to standardise the experience of studying English:

- Should have received their full education in KSA, irrespective of state or private schooling
- Should have all recently finished the Foundation Preliminary Year Program in a Saudi HEI
- Should have L2 learning experience with a western woman EFL teacher in a Saudi HEI

**4. Level of English:**

For the convenience of data collection and analysis, the participants should be considered 'independent users' according to CEFR. Therefore, the language competency level should be at least intermediate English, minimum of B1 or above, corresponding to that of at least IELTS band score of 5.0. Specify: motivation for learning English

### 4.4.3 Participant profile: learners

Below is an itemised description of the Saudi learners recruited in the present study. I included nine categories in columns to provide sufficient demographical and motivational information for learning English.

Table 7 Profile of cohort 2a: Interviews

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Ibtisam S(IP1)</b>	19	Saudi	AR	M	S	B1	Language & Translation	Investment
<b>Khalifa S(IP2)</b>	25	Saudi	JED	M	M	B2	Interior design	Academic interest EMI in chosen specialisation Investment
<b>Faridah S(IP3)</b>	20	Saudi	AR	M	S	B1	Tech. Information Assistant	Instrumentality
<b>Ruqayyah S(IP4)</b>	22	Saudi	AR	M	S	B1	Graphic Design	EMI in chosen specialisation
<b>Shumaila S(IP5)</b>	21	Saudi	HIJ	M	M	B1	MA student	Translation

Table 8 Profile of cohort 2b: Narratives

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Dalyah S(NP1)</b>	19	Saudi	AR	M	S	B2	Language & Translation	Personal interest Instrumentality
<b>Jamila S(NP2)</b>	21	Saudi	AR	M	M	B2	Language & Translation	Personal interest
<b>Sabiha S(NP3)</b>	21	Saudi	AR	M	S	B2	Language & Translation	Personal interest Investment
<b>Reem S(NP4)</b>	22	Saudi	AR	M	S	B2	Applied linguistics	Instrumentality Investment
<b>Arwa S(NP5)</b>	22	Saudi	JED	M	M	B2	Language & Translation	Milieu - Socially motivated (Family) Investment
<b>Aliyah S(NP6)</b>	22	Saudi	HIJ	M	S	B2	Language & Translation	Personal interest
<b>Maysoon S(NP7)</b>	22	Saudi	HIJ	M	S	B2	Language & Translation	Personal interest
<b>Sherine S(NP8)</b>	22	Saudi	AR	M	M	B2	Language & Translation	Milieu - Socially motivated (Family) Investment

#### Description

- 1 Code and Pseudonyms: **Student (S) Interview/ (N) Narrative Participant No. = S(NP1)**
- 2 Age (disclosed at the time of the study)
- 3 Nationality
- 4 Region of KSA (AR: Riyadh, JED: Jeddah; HIJ: Hijaz)
- 5 Religion: (M = Muslim; NM = Non-Muslim)
- 6 Marital Status: (Married = M; Single = S)
- 7 Estimated language level according to EU framework
- 8 Degree and career path
- 9 L2 motivation

## **4.5 Data collection process**

### **4.5.1 Initial study**

The initial study entailed one participant being selected for teacher cohort 1 and one participant for the learner cohort 2a. These two participants were added to the final data sets.

The recruitment process, the data collection processes, the narrative frame and semi-structured questions were tested. At the time of this study, it seemed that in-person interviews were somewhat inconvenient in KSA. Ten years earlier, Arab researchers in KSA, Al-Kahtani et al. (2005), had observed similar challenges and claimed that it was due to the prohibition on women driving: 'Travel is extremely difficult for women in KSA, most of the interviews were conducted by telephone' (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005, p. 229). Al-Khateeb (2018), in a recent study, found that even in using Skype as a medium of qualitative research in KSA with female participants, the issue persists. Al-Khateeb (2018), as a female Saudi researcher, stated from her experience that female Saudi participants expressed hesitation regarding the face-to-face Skype interviews because it can compromise their anonymity. However, Al-Khateeb claims that the use of telephone and other VoIP applications as a means of communication is becoming more accepted by different residents in KSA. 'VoIP applications help in conducting interviews and are especially useful in qualitative research in KSA, to overcome the barriers of location, accessibility and cost' (Novick, 2008; Irvine et al., 2013, cited in Al-Khateeb, 2018, p. 2253).

My initial study successfully tested the accessibility of participants, the main challenges and helped improve the data collection methods. The teacher found the narrative frame easy to use, and the learner responded easily to the interview questions. The main issue found in the initial study was the difficulty of recruiting enough cohort 2 participants. Based on the analysis of the initial study, two major changes were made to the research design. First, I changed the face-to-face interview design to telephonic interviews through a VoIP application. In addition to this, I was strongly advised that the narrative frame would need redesigning for the learner cohort for comparative purposes.

### **4.5.2 Main study**

The main study entailed seven more teachers being added to cohort 1 and four more learners to cohort 2a (interviews). For the main study, I decided to conduct telephonic interviews, as Al-Kahtani et al. (2005) had done previously. The VoIP application I chose was WebEx. It was chosen because it is less informal than Skype or IMO and has a greater range of professional functions to maintain anonymity. WebEx is a business VoIP application, which is generally used to schedule long-distance, international conference calls and provides better quality calls because it is accepted on Saudi proxy servers without using a VPN. The Saudi participants in this study accepted to engage in audio interviews on the condition that there would be no video, relating to restrictions on photography as mentioned in the handbook (Appendix 3, *You should not*, p.176; *Photography*, p.



177) and Teacher Etiquette (Appendix 4). The interviewees set up their own interview space, usually from the comfort of their home, which proved convenient.

### **4.5.3 Extra data**

In the second phase of data collection, I managed to recruit four additional Saudi participants for cohort 2b in the main study. The extra data phase was included in the main study, as it was done through a different set of contacts I obtained from an event (see Table 9).

### **4.5.4 Treatment of data**

The audio recordings from the interviews with cohort 2a were received electronically directly into my designated research email account via the WebEx platform. Similarly, the narratives of teacher cohort 1 and cohort 2b were received in the same designated research email account. The narratives and interview audios were then encrypted with the participant codes to preserve the anonymity of the participants. These were used in the data analysis. In the write up of the discussion of findings, pseudonyms were then added for the sake of memorability. All the data were stored with protective passwords and will be eliminated according to HREC conditions as stipulated in the timeframe of completing my doctoral research.

### **4.5.5 Transcription conventions**

Transcription is often seen as problematic in the process of analysis (Kvale, 1996 as cited in Tilley, 2003, p. 751; Lapadat and Lindsay, 1999). For the sake of transparency, I will justify the transcription convention choices made.

First, the interviews in my main study were transcribed professionally. Despite professional transcription being a common practice (Tilley, 2003), this is a potential area of criticism. It is widely acknowledged that the process of transcription aids in the researcher's deeper understanding; however, it does not necessarily guarantee better quality transcripts (Tilley, 2003). My transcriptions were outsourced to a reputable company specialised in academic transcription, which adheres to the same regulations as my university, ensuring professional confidentiality.

Second, the transcription convention chosen was verbatim to limit the interpretation of the transcriber. Then, the accuracy of the researcher and interviewee voices in the verbatim script, especially in any overlapping discussion, I carefully examined (Tilley, 2003). Afterwards, each audio file was played repeatedly while reading the transcription. From my experience, this process aided my thematic analysis immensely. While Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) criticised outsourcing transcriptions, emphasising that the importance of transcription work goes beyond typical concerns for accuracy, they did insist that the process of listening and re-listening in the making of the transcript enriches the analytic process.

Lastly, the choices around the representation of the speaker in the text need addressing. The L2 learner's spoken language was transcribed verbatim; however, its original spoken form was then 'tidied-up' (I eliminated the over-talking,

unclear words, pauses, unwanted utterances, i.e. stutters, repetitions, affirmations and incomplete sentences). A second process occurred when I quoted excerpts of the script; I added necessary punctuation and used a different font to identify spoken text from written text to help the reader. I use one font for interviews (cohort 2a): *Arial narrow* and a different font for the narratives (cohort 1 and cohort 2b): *times new roman*. The choices I made were done so as to best represent the participants' intended meaning. If this process from transcription to academic representation is overlooked, it can render the speaker's utterance 'rather foolish' (Mishler, 1991).

There was no video for most of the interviews, and only one was face-to-face. I took notes during the interviews, to describe non-verbal cues (sighs, voice changes, emphasis, pauses and tone). I used this sparingly to avoid over-interpretation. A pause could be a natural L2 hesitation. However, in one extract from participant Khalfa (p.135), I wish to include her non-verbal gesture to reinforce her point about 'distance'.

## **4.6 Quantity of data**

### **4.6.1 Quantity of narrative data**

An evident difference between the cohorts was that the narratives showed varying degrees of storytelling and length. The total amount of data generated for the study is presented in Table 6 at the end of this section. The average narrative for teacher cohort 1 was 2,545 words, whereas the average length of the narratives for learner cohort 2b was 1,700 words. This difference could be due to the fact that the teachers' narratives are written by native speakers of English, while the learners' narratives are written by L2 learners. This difference can also be due to the differing familiarity with creative writing and the narrative enquiry methodology. The teachers naturally expanded the narrative frame to incorporate their own creative writing and wrote more, with richer descriptive data. Conversely, with learner cohort 2b, the narrative frame seemed to restrict the detail of experiential accounts of real events to the frame. I referred to Bamberg (2004a, b) and Georgakopoulou and Bamberg's work (2005) on 'small stories' of experience and narrative inquiry; their narratives consisted of what has been referred to in similar studies (Georgakopoulou, 2006) as 'mainly declarative statements and expositions', but this does not take away from the narrative itself (see Section 3.1.3).

### **4.6.2 Quantity of interview data**

Given the dropout in the initial study of in-person interviews with Saudi women EFL learners (2a), the method was changed to telephonic interviews in the main study. Telephonic interviews have been stated to be less helpful in qualitative research because of the importance of visual cues and rapport; moreover, the length of the call can affect the quality of the obtained data (Hancock et al., 1998; Sturges et al., 2004; Irvine et al., 2013). The nature of the VoIP medium WebEx being more formal could also have reduced the length of the interviews. I found that the lengths of the VoIP interviews were significantly shorter compared to the in-person interviews. The lack of audio-visual cues in dialogue to encourage the

continuation and the progression of natural rapport building during the researcher–interviewee exchanges can be attributed to the data collection method. Table 9 below shows the total amount of data generated in the study which includes both the initial study and the main study.

Table 9 Total amount of data generated for the study

Western women EFL teachers	Data collection phase	No.	Participant code	Pseudonyms	Data generated: (word count)
<b>Narrative Cohort 1a</b>	Main study	<b>1</b>	T(NP1)	<i>Winifred</i>	2373
		<b>2</b>	T(NP2)	<i>Annabel</i>	2915
		<b>3</b>	T(NP3)	<i>Jean</i>	1405
		<b>4</b>	T(NP4)	<i>Joanna</i>	1323
	Initial study	<b>5</b>	T(NP5)	<i>Jane</i>	3022
	Main study	<b>6</b>	T(NP6)	<i>Kamilla</i>	3339
		<b>7</b>	T(NP7)	<i>Shelley</i>	950
		<b>8</b>	T(NP8)	<i>Cynthia</i>	5020
Saudi women EFL learners			Participant code	Pseudonyms	Data generated: (mins)
	Main study	<b>9</b>	S(IP1)	<i>Ibtisam</i>	41.56'
	Initial study	<b>10</b>	S(IP2)	<i>Khalfa</i>	35.45
	Main study	<b>11</b>	S(IP3)	<i>Faridah</i>	75.56'
		<b>12</b>	S(IP4)	<i>Ruqayyah</i>	31.24'
		<b>13</b>	S(IP5)	<i>Shumaila</i>	36.27'
Saudi women EFL learners			Participant code	Pseudonyms	Data generated: (word count)
<b>Narrative Cohort 2b</b>	Main study Phase 1	<b>14</b>	S(NP1)	<i>Dalyah</i>	1829
		<b>15</b>	S(NP2)	<i>Jamila</i>	1884
		<b>16</b>	S(NP3)	<i>Sabiha</i>	1677
		<b>17</b>	S(NP4)	<i>Reem</i>	1254
	Extra data Phase 2	<b>18</b>	S(NP5)	<i>Arwa</i>	1714
		<b>19</b>	S(NP6)	<i>Aliyah</i>	1231
		<b>20</b>	S(NP7)	<i>Maysoon</i>	1191
		<b>21</b>	S(NP8)	<i>Sherine</i>	2820

## 4.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I initially explained the overview of the research process. I explained, in turn, the recruitment process for each cohort, providing detailed tables of the participant profiles. I explained the data collection process for the initial study, the main study and the treatment of data. I justified decisions taken throughout this process from recruitment to transcription. I ended with a final table of the quantity of data for all cohorts, including each stage of the study.

## Chapter 5 Data Analysis

This chapter describes the approach used in this qualitative study to analyse the data. It aims to demonstrate how transparency in qualitative data analysis can be achieved by applying the six-step thematic network analysis approach (Attride-Stirling, 2001). A detailed description of the data analysis is provided in three stages: from dissecting the text segments, coding the highlighted text segments in the texts and forming the basic themes to constructing the thematic networks (Stage A). Thereafter, it describes and explores the thematic networks on which the findings are based (Stage B). In the following chapter, the emerging global themes and the discussion of findings are presented (Stage C).

### 5.1 Data analysis in qualitative research

In the data analysis of qualitative research, especially of narrative inquiry, concerns are often raised concerning the validity and transparency of the data analysis process due to the co-construction of the narrative. Peshkin (1988) emphasised that stories are inherently multi-layered and ambiguous, so it is especially important for the researcher not to over-identify or co-construct versions of the truth with the participants in the data analysis stage. Researchers performing qualitative data analysis do not always provide access to argumentation methods, i.e. the mechanical process in interpreting the data (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). A critique of the qualitative research of sociocultural phenomena is that findings are often drawn without clearly identifying the evidence supporting them. Attride-Stirling (2001) reiterated this concern, stating that there is a need for transparency in data analysis methods. Bell (2002, p. 210) also explained, 'When researchers take people's stories and place them into a larger narrative, they are imposing meaning on participants' lived experience'.

Interpretation in this study can impose meaning on the stories being researched. Consequently, the method must be more transparent. There is a need for greater disclosure in the qualitative analysis; it is especially evident that there is a need for more sophisticated tools to facilitate this better (Attride-Stirling, 2001). There is a risk that, as a qualitative researcher, my interpretation may present findings that are not firmly anchored in the data. Therefore, the interpretation process in this study is displayed transparently and made accessible for closer scrutiny. 'Better disclosure can only be achieved by recording, systematising and disclosing our methods of analysis, so that existing techniques may be shared and improved, and new and better tools may be developed' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 385). The interpretative tools referred to above is the process of applying the thematic analysis framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001) and displaying the data analysis through thematic networks.

#### 5.1.1 *Thematic network analysis*

This study applies Attride-Stirling's (2001) 'Thematic Analysis Framework', a six-step process that structured my data analysis. It is referred to throughout this chapter, according to the analytic stages A to C (see Table 9). Attride-Stirling's

(2001) technique is based on the principles of the Argumentation Theory (Toulmin, 1958). In Argumentation Theory, 'rigour' is said to be found in the reasoning behind linking the data analysis to the findings to answer the research questions (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The procedure of the thematic network analysis is not used to arrive at the findings themselves, but 'it provides a technique for breaking up text and finding within it explicit rationalisations and their implicit signification' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 394).

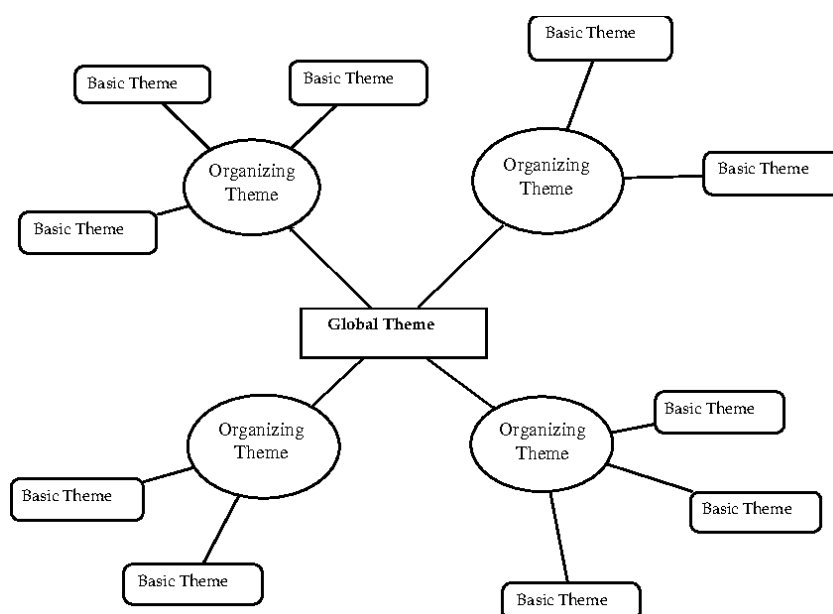
The qualitative analysis tools systematically disclose the data analysis methods and interpretative processes that the researcher utilises by transparently exhibiting the mechanics of argumentation (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This is achieved by using the steps that formulate and consolidate a thesis argument by grounding the premises in the raw data. It evidences codes, then develops them into basic themes and into organising themes and, finally, into global themes. This argument is schematically described with thematic networks, and from this interpretation, the findings are drawn. Table 10, below, is drawn directly from Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 394).

Table 10 Thematic analysis framework

ANALYSIS STAGE A: REDUCTION OR BREAKDOWN OF TEXT		
Steps	Process:	Theme
Step 1 Code Material	Identify lowest-order premises evident in the text (a) Devise a coding framework (b) Dissect text into text segments	Basic themes
Step 2 Identify Themes	Extract subthemes underlying the research questions: (a) Abstract themes from coded text segments (b) Refine themes	
Step 3 Construct Thematic Networks	Visual transference of themes in mind maps or thematic 'networks' according to correlations, comparisons, similarities, and contrasts: (a) Arrange themes (b) Select Basic Themes (c) Rearrange into Organising Themes (d) Deduce Global Theme(s) (e) Illustrate as thematic network(s) (f) Verify and refine the network(s)	
ANALYSIS STAGE B: EXPLORATION OF TEXT		
Steps	Process:	Theme
Step 4 Describe and Explore Thematic Networks	Categories of basic themes grouped together to summaries more abstract principles (a) Describe the network (b) Explore the network	Organising Themes
Step 5 Summarise Thematic Networks	Summarise the principal themes that emerge in the description of the network.	
ANALYSIS STAGE C: INTEGRATION OF EXPLORATION		
Step 6 Interpret Patterns	(i) The deductions in the summaries of all the networks (if more than one was used) (ii) These deductions and the relevant theory used to explore the significant themes, concepts, patterns and structures that arose in the text	Global Themes

In step 3, the analysis is illustrated using *thematic analysis networks*. This process starts by identifying the basic themes from text segments, building a premise to organise the themes and then an overall argument (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 394). Figure 19 is an example of a diagram of a 'thematic analysis network' taken directly from the work of Attride-Stirling (2001, p. 388).

Figure 19 Example of thematic analysis network



**Basic Themes**

Lowest-order premises evident in the text

**Organizing Themes**

Categories of basic themes grouped to summarise more abstract principles

**Global Themes**

Super-ordinate themes encapsulating the key metaphors in the text as a whole

By using thematic networks, as an organising principle, representational value is added to the thematic analysis. Moreover, it becomes easier for the researcher to show the mechanical procedures employed in going from text to interpretation (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

### 5.1.2 Thematic analysis framework

This data analysis section is structured according to the thematic analysis network for teacher cohort 1, learner cohort 2a and learner cohort 2b. The data analysis chapter is divided into two sections.

First, the thematic analysis process (Table 10) is described from stage A to stage C for teacher cohort 1. The same process is repeated for the learner cohorts. The learners' data are divided into learner cohort 2a's interviews and learner cohort 2b's narratives. Each is described from stages A to C. This ensures that the thematic analysis was as coherent as possible in answering the RQ5–7 for the learner cohort, while maintaining the data analysis for each cohort separately.

## 5.2 Data analysis of Teacher Cohort 1

Stage A comprises three parts with the aim to reduce or break down the text into 'text segments' or 'a statement of belief anchored around a central notion' (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p.388). In the first step of Stage A, *coding the material*, a coding framework was devised. The 'text segments' were extracted based on how western women EFL teachers describe their experiences of teaching Saudi women in KSA and the pre-service and post-service sociocultural perceptions of western women EFL teachers regarding KSA and Saudi women. The research design of the narratives facilitated this process as the narratives were in three parts:

- i) Reflections (feelings/metaphors) before moving to KSA
- ii) Reflections (feelings/metaphors) on their experience in KSA
- iii) Reflections (feelings/metaphors) on their experience after leaving KSA

In coding the material, the narratives are dissected into text segments. The narrative sections ('before', 'during' and 'after') were read in each narrative multiple times and were then compared. Five key aspects emerged from the narratives:

- i) Experience (description/opinion) of living in KSA
- ii) Experience (description/opinion) of teaching Saudi women
- iii) Teaching experience (description/opinion) in KSA
- iv) Post-service feelings/sociocultural perceptions about KSA (feelings/metaphors/description/opinion)

The quantity or frequency of segments was not necessarily given precedence. As the themes were drawn from subjective realities, the segment could be unique to one participant's story. Then, I devised a coding framework, and the narratives were dissected into segments. The text segments were clustered according to the issues discussed in the teachers' narratives. Both common (similar) or exceptional (different) themes according to the five aspects. The most salient text segments were colour coded. A total of 78 themes were instanced for cohort 1.

After this process of coding, the themes were devised based on the coded text segments; the 78 text segments were labelled (Figure 19). These labels were applied to all eight narratives. The 78 text segments were then grouped into 28 different codes. These codes were refined further, following the next step, identifying themes.

For example, the participants described different reasons for relocating to KSA, which were highlighted as text segments. These were then collectively labelled:

'Reason for coming to Saudi' (column 1)

The *issues discussed* (column 2) include the cluster of excerpts taken from the text called 'text segments':

– Salary; – Benefits; – Job security

After the text segments, direct quotes from the narratives were included in column 2 in inverted commas to provided extra detail as follows:

- Helping Saudi women (text segment): '*plight of Saudi women*' (direct quote)

It is important to maintain transparency in this process according to Attride-Stirling (2001); hence, access to the full data analysis process of coding the segments to formulate basic themes is provided for cohort one (Appendix 11).

Table 11 Thematic analysis table: From codes to themes

Codes	Main topic (Issues discussed)	Text segments (excerpts: narrative frames)	Basic themes
• Reason for coming to Saudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary</li> <li>- Benefits</li> <li>- Job security</li> <li>- Teaching package</li> <li>- Helping Saudi women</li> </ul>	<p><i>'Tax-free'</i></p> <p><i>'modern, comfort'</i></p> <p><i>'plight of Saudi women'</i></p> <p><i>'I hoped I might be of help'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-service motivation [+]</li> </ul>
• Logistical constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unspontaneous lifestyle</li> <li>- Certain hardships; frustrations</li> <li>- Lack of ease</li> <li>- Feelings</li> <li>- No women allowed to drive</li> <li>- Problems with transport</li> </ul>	<p><i>'No spontaneous lifestyle'</i></p> <p><i>'trapped'</i></p> <p><i>'Taxi or driver issues'</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistical constraint [-]</li> <li>• Difficulties: transport [-]</li> </ul>

In Table 11, the content from the *Codes* column summarises the *main topics*, derived from the *text segments* column, which are then used to support the *basic theme*, in the final right column. This process corresponds to step two – identifying themes. As the text segments were reduced to labels, these were used to formulate 24 basic themes (see Appendix 11). For example, the label, 'reason for coming to Saudi' (column 1) was refined into 'pre-service motivation', which was the basic theme. A basic theme was determined in terms of whether it was positive [+] or negative [-], based on the contextual information in the narrative. Themes that were possibly relevant to cohort 2a+b were noted, referring to their sociocultural perspectives. Themes that exemplified a noticeable contrast or differences with other themes were found. For example, sociocultural perceptions before leaving for KSA were described and then sociocultural perceptions after cultural immersion (teaching in KSA) for over a year. This formulated the *basic theme*, for example, 'pre-service motivation'.

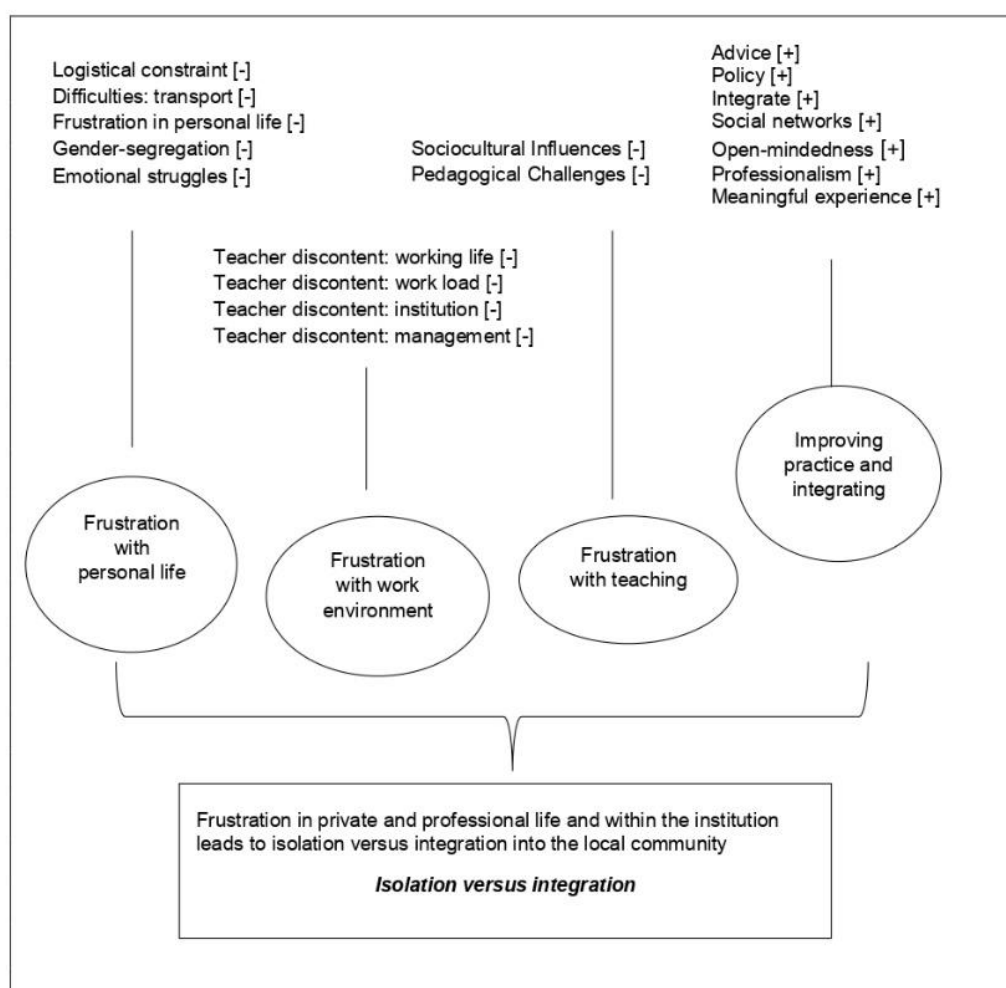
As steps 1 and 2 were completed, the text segments were copied and pasted onto a second table, so each text segment could be labelled with the following (Appendix 15):



- (i) Participant code
- (ii) Emerging themes
- (iii) Reference to the specific quotations that contained each theme

Thematic networks are an integral part of the analysis process, and I found them useful for clarity and structure in the data analysis process (Attride-Stirling, 2001). According to steps 3 (a) to (d), the construction of the thematic networks is based on the previous two steps (Figure 17), and the whole sequence of steps are now described schematically. The 24 basic themes were finally categorised into 7 broad groups, which were re-arranged and categorised into 7 organising themes. From the organising themes identified, I deduced 6 global themes. These global themes are the findings of the study for cohort 1 and are discussed in Chapter 6. These steps are illustrated in two separate thematic networks (a) Figure 20 , below, and (b) Figure 21. The thematic network diagrams are included in the main body of the thesis for transparency to demonstrate the process of data analysis and interpretation, therefore attributing more credibility to the qualitative interpretation and analysis to validate the findings.

Figure 20 Thematic network (a) Cohort 1



**Key:**

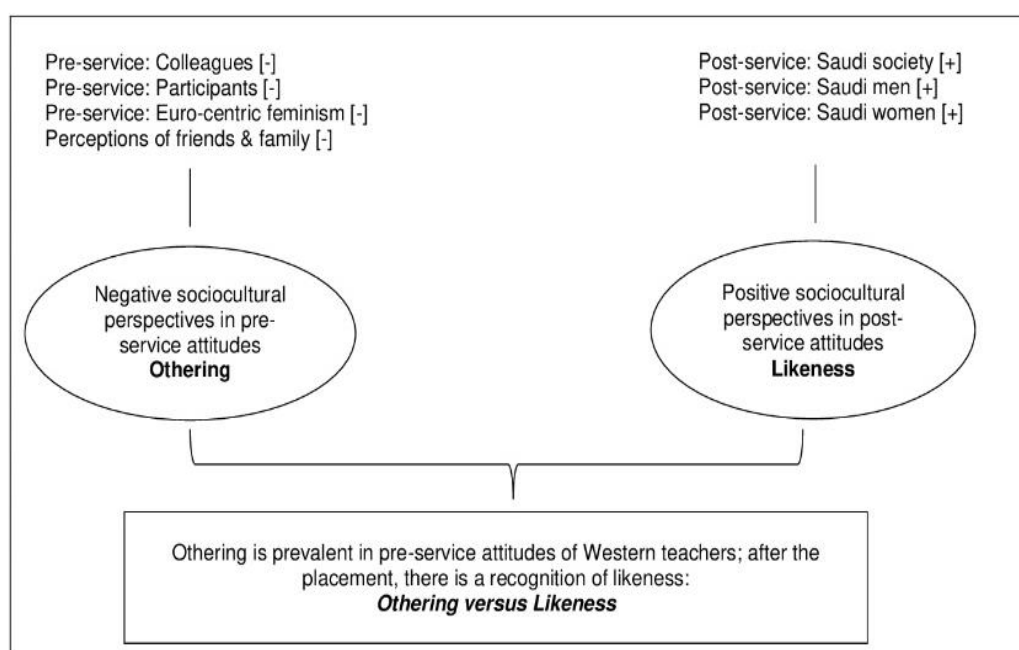
'Pre-service motivation [+]

Basic theme [+positive / - =negative]

— ○ — Organising theme

— □ — Global theme

Figure 21 Thematic network (b) for cohort 1



### 5.2.1 Thematic analysis of data

In Stage B, exploring the text, the two thematic networks that emerged from the interviews and narratives were summarised.

#### (i) Thematic network (a)

The global theme of the thematic network (a) for western women EFL teacher cohort 1 – isolation versus integration – conceptualises the observation that the teachers' experiences depend on how a teacher individually manages to integrate into the local Saudi community. The term 'local community' in this description is a multifaceted term in this study. It refers to the ethnic culture of the Saudi community, the teaching community and the organisational community culture of the workplace. Therefore, it refers to three aspects of their lives: personal life, work environment and classroom teaching. It was demonstrated that underlying 'teacher discontent' was experienced by these teachers, leading to 'frustration' in their private and professional life, which then led to isolation. However, the narratives acknowledged that integration through intercultural cultural exchange with the local community helped in dealing with the discontentment felt in personal life, work environment and teaching.

Therefore, a fourth organising theme was drawn from the different narratives about their advice (on improving these three areas of the teachers' lives). These teachers described their coping mechanisms in dealing with challenges and the ways to prevent isolation through intercultural exchange. The first thematic network illustrates the claims from the basic themes to four organising themes, from which the one global theme was developed: frustration in private and professional life and within the institution leads to isolation.

## **(ii) Thematic network (b)**

The global theme of the thematic network (b) for cohort 1 – othering versus likeness – conceptualises the sociocultural change experienced by these teachers after living and working in KSA. The global theme identified a tension in adapting to the Saudi culture. This is perhaps because, in the narratives, their pre-service attitudes had been heavily influenced by secondary sources of information concerning KSA. This included the reactions of their friends and family in their home country, which were then reinforced by their new western colleagues in the workplace who had negative appraisals of KSA, its people and its culture. The attitude of ‘othering’ (Said, 2003) was identified in the pre-service attitude.

However, in the reflections on their experience in KSA, this secondary information was tested by experiencing the Saudi culture and its people first-hand. Western women EFL teachers came to recognise a sense of affinity or ‘likeness’ in their sociocultural attitudes towards Saudi women and men and the society in general. Despite the marked differences in culture, ideology, religion and worldview, they found a sense of affinity with Saudi women rather than difference or worse, disdain. This likeness was either collective (perceiving Saudi women generally) or individual (finding one woman exceptional to the prior belief systems). However, I observed that this change in attitude or sociocultural perception largely depends on how well the teacher mediates her integration [+] into the community or the isolation [-] due to which she feels unable to adapt to the context-based on external factors, such as management, workload and restrictions.

The second thematic network (b) showed that the pre-service attitudes of western women EFL teachers were mostly negative [-]. Post-service attitudes through their reflections on their experience after leaving KSA were positive [+]. This was termed as a feeling of ‘likeness’ with the Saudi women, rather than, as the basic themes describe, a feeling of distance, alienation and judgemental sociocultural perceptions towards the Saudi society. This was termed as ‘othering’, as referred to in the literature review of otherisation (see Section 2.2.1.4). Overall, greater tolerance of cultural diversity was expressed towards Saudi societal norms after the western teachers’ successful cultural immersion.

Stage C of the thematic analysis (see Table 10) involved interpretation of the data analysis. Step 6 of this stage is defined by the steps taken from the basic themes to the global themes. An extract of the thematic analysis framework was collated in Table 12 for reference. It shows the process of summarising the themes. Subsequently, here, the process of data analysis is shown in the tabular form after completing steps 1–3, in order to demonstrate how one finding – isolation versus integration – was interpreted from the data. I used this thematic analysis process to maintain transparency in this qualitative study; accordingly, I include an excerpt of the thematic analysis coding for cohort 1 in this section, to show how I arrived at the global theme ‘isolation versus integration’ (see Appendix 11).

Table 12 Thematic analysis coding excerpt

	Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes
Private life	1) Logistical constraint [-] 2) Difficulties with transport [-] 3) Emotional constraint [-] 4) Motivation: Saudi [+] 5) Gender segregation [-]	<i>Frustration: private life</i>	Isolation versus integration
Workplace	6) Emotional struggles [-] 7) Discontent: personal life [-] 1) Discontent: working life [-] 2) management style [-] 3) workload [-] 4) institution [-]	Isolation: private life  <i>Frustration: Work</i> Isolation: work life	
Teaching	1) Sociocultural influences [-] 2) Pedagogical challenges [-]	<i>Frustration: Teaching</i> Isolation: Institution	
Integration	1) Advice [+] 2) Policy [+] 3) Meaningful experiences [+] 4) Integrate: Saudi [+] 5) Social networks [+] 6) Open-mindedness [+] 7) Professionalism [+]	<i>Acculturation process</i> Integration	

## 5.3 Data analysis of learner cohorts

This section describes cohort 2a's interviews first and then cohort 2b's narratives from Stage A to Stage B. To keep the thematic analysis as coherent as possible in answering RQ5–7 for the Saudi cohort, it maintains the data analysis for each cohort separately.

### 5.3.1 Coding the material: Cohort 2a interviews

The interview questions had three main segments that facilitated analysing the transcribed interviews into different parts:

- a) The importance of English
- b) Globalisation
- c) English in an Islamic setting

For cohort 2a interviews, the breakdown of the text was based on how Saudi women EFL learners in KSA (a) perceive English, (b) use English in practical ways and (c) understand and experience globalisation. In the step of 'dissecting text segments', the salient issues discussed were classified into codes. These corresponded to the following five aspects:

- i) Perceptions of English as a language
- ii) Perceptions of western English teachers
- iii) Perception of the experience of learning English
- iv) Practical uses of English
- v) Describing globalisation

I found a total of 47 text segments in the transcribed interviews. These were refined into clear and meaningful labels, as eight basic themes which applied to all four interviews. For example, each participant described different reasons for

perceiving English as important, which were highlighted as text segments. These were then collectively labelled:

‘Importance of English’ (column 1)

The *issues discussed* (column 2) include the cluster of excerpts taken from the interview transcripts called ‘text segments’:

- Personal importance
- Societal importance

### 5.3.2 Identifying themes

As with the western women EFL teacher cohort 1, I used the same procedure with the 47 text segments for cohort 2a. I took the text segments and grouped them into codes; then the code’s text segments were re-read. With the multiple reading of the interviews, nine basic themes emerged. I arranged the themes and presented them in a table (Appendix 12). An extract of this table is presented below in Table 13.

Table 13 Thematic analysis codes of cohort 2a: Interviews

<b>Codes Cohort 2a</b>	<b>Main topic (Issues discussed)</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>
-Importance: English	-Personal importance -Societal perspectives	Importance of English [+]
-Perception: English	-Generational gaps in English fluency -Adjectives/metaphors of English	Metaphors of English [+]
-Uses: English	-Socializing through English -Academic purposes -English-only HE policy -Professionalism -Interacting as a Muslim woman outside the classroom	Uses of English [+]
-Social transformation: English	-Open-mindedness in Saudi society -Changing societal attitude towards English	

### 5.3.3 Coding the material: Cohort 2b narratives

As with the Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2a, the same procedure was carried out with cohort 2b. For cohort 2b narratives, the research design facilitated the coding process because the narratives were divided into three parts:

- a. Reflections on ‘Before learning English’
- b. Reflections on their experience during the process of language acquisition
- c. Reflections on their experience after becoming fluent in English

As with the teacher cohort one and Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2a, the process of ‘dissecting text into segments’ was applied to cohort 2b as well. This was according to the device I developed by colour-coding the text segments related to how Saudi women EFL learners do the following:

- i) Perceive English
- ii) Use English in their daily lives or free time, and
- iii) Experience globalisation

Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2b codes formulated into basic themes, such as the following:

- Importance of English [+]
- Uses of English [+]

However, additional issues were found, which added greater depth to the interviews, such as the positive impact of the following:

- Western teachers [+]

The Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2b expanded on the basic themes found in cohort 2a, proving that the narratives added greater understanding, for example:

- Perception of English [+]
- Perceptions of English: father
- Perceptions of English: mother

These codes were arranged and presented in a table for basic themes (Appendix 13). Table 14, below, is an excerpt to demonstrate the process of data analysis. Table 15 is an excerpt from that table to demonstrate the process of data analysis (see Appendix 13).

Table 14 Thematic analysis codes of cohort 2b

	Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes
<b>Impacts of English:</b>	1) Personal importance of English 2) Intercultural importance of English 3) Perception of academic English 4) English usage outside the classroom 5) Perceptions of English: father 6) Perception of English: mother 7) Generational gaps with English	Socially indispensable	<b>Empowerment versus Linguistic imperialism</b>
<b>Individual</b>			
<b>Community</b>	<b>a) Positive perceptions: impact of English:</b> 1) Gaining respect / social status through English fluency 2) Increasing open-mindedness 3) Changing societal attitudes towards English	Social status and increase in social influence with English	
<b>Saudi society</b>	<b>b) Negative perceptions: impact of English:</b> 1) Discrimination without English 2) Exclusion without English 3) Attitude of native speakers of English 4) Attitude of non-English speakers of English 5) Linguistic imperialism of English	Discrimination and reduced opportunities without English	
<b>Saudi women</b>	<b>c) Gender-related impacts of English fluency</b> 1) Influencing Identity 2) Influencing self-confidence 3) Influencing professional status and self-worth 4) Increasing global citizenship 5) Increasing gender equality 6) English as a form of protection 7) Female empowerment through English	Female empowerment through English	

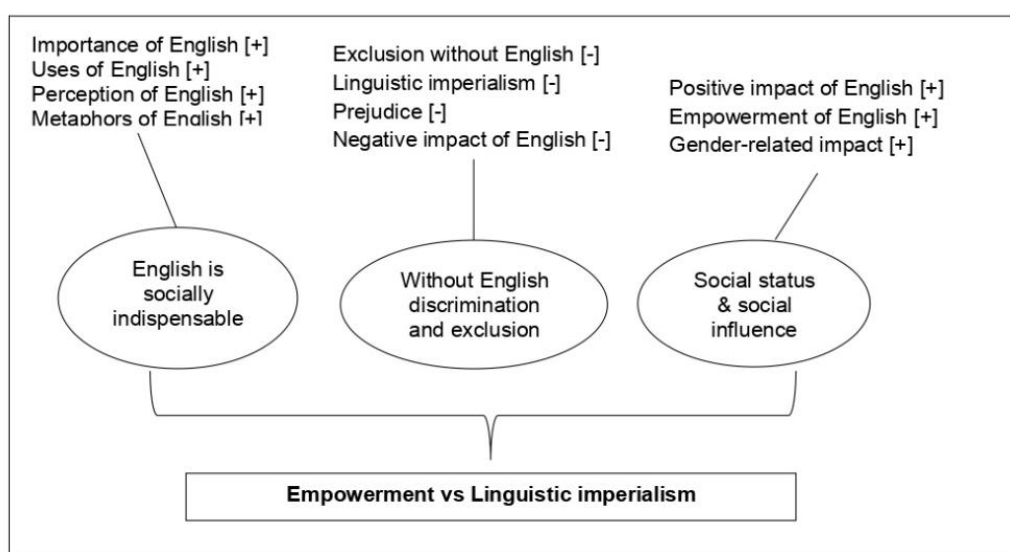
Table 15 Global themes for Saudi women EFL learner cohorts 2a+b

<b>Codes: Cohort 2b</b>	<b>(Issues discussed) Main topic</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>
Intercultural experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Western teachers at university</li> <li>-Positive impact – teaching style</li> <li>-Avoidance of sociocultural exchange in class</li> <li>-No western influence (formal learning)</li> <li>-Western influence (informal Learning)</li> <li>-Misconceptions</li> <li>-Stereotypes</li> <li>-Othering</li> </ul>	<p>Western teachers [+]</p> <p>Negative impact: Western teachers [-]</p>
Importance of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Personal importance</li> <li>-Intercultural importance</li> </ul>	Importance of English [+]
Learning English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Learning English at university</li> <li>-English for translation</li> <li>-Academic importance for HE</li> <li>-Professionalism</li> <li>-Informal learning</li> </ul>	Uses of English [+]

### 5.3.4 Identifying themes: Cohort 2b narratives

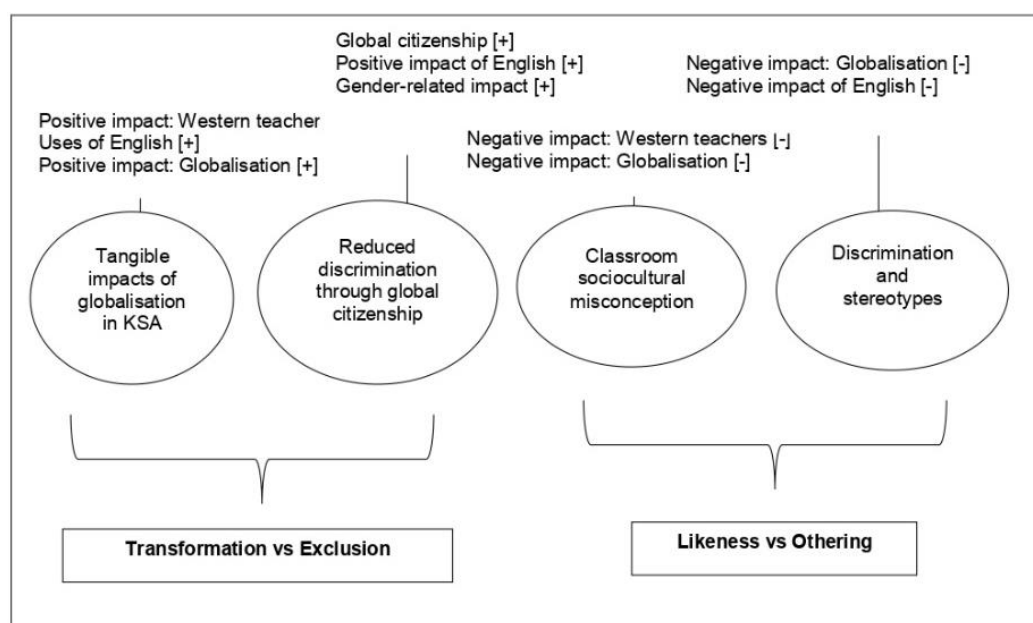
From the 39 codes, I extracted 11 basic themes through the re-reading of the narratives multiple times. I finalised 11 basic themes based on the related conceptual content, and then I selected and categorised into labels. I then rearranged these into organising themes. These steps correspond to 3(a) to 3(c) in the thematic analysis framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The aim of these steps is to construct thematic networks. The thematic networks deduce global themes, by combining the interviews and narratives of the Saudi women EFL learner cohorts, 3 global themes were produced.

Figure 22 Thematic network I for Saudi women EFL learner cohort 2a + b



In Figure 22, I demonstrate how one finding, ‘empowerment versus linguistic imperialism’ emerged from the data. The global theme was built up from the organising themes which were extracted from the basic themes. The label ‘empowerment’ represents the positive aspects [+] about English. The label ‘linguistic imperialism’ represents the negative aspects [-] about English. The global theme was dichotomous (i.e ‘x’ versus ‘y’) because there was evidence of diametrically opposing views of English.

Figure 23 Impact of globalisation Saudi women EFL learners cohort 2a + b



Likewise, in Figure 23, I demonstrate how two further findings, ‘transformation vs exclusion’ and ‘likeness versus othering’ emerged from the data. The global themes were built up from the organising themes. The four organising themes were extracted from the basic themes. The label ‘transformation’ and ‘Likeness’ represents the positive aspects [+] of globalisation. Whereas, the label ‘Exclusion’ and ‘Othering’ represents the negative aspects [-] of globalisation. Again, this was represented as dichotomous because there was evidence of diametrically opposing views of globalisation. These labels were chosen because I considered them the closest interpretation of the data. The thematic analysis framework for cohorts 2a+b as outlined in Table 13 and Table 14, for reference, see the full table (Appendix 14). It displays the process of summarising the themes for cohort 2a + b into global themes.

### 5.3.5 Critique of coding and thematic analysis

I briefly justify how I went about coding the data to derive the global themes. Here, I will critique the process of coding according to general limitations of the coding process and the creation of themes.

A question often arises about transparency, specifically how the researcher makes the difference between codes and categories evident. I made a



distinction between codes and categories by making two levels of coding according to the Thematic Analytic Framework, which transparently exhibits the mechanics of argumentation (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The process of assigning 'segments', 'codes' and 'themes' was explained in detail (see Section 5.2). This refers to 'categories' which 'are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea' (Creswell, 2013, p. 186, cited in Elliott, 2018). By using a combination of the framework and the Thematic Analysis Networks (Attride-Stirling, 2001), this distinction was achieved. Another question arises about how many codes there are. As a researcher, using the Thematic Analytic Framework for the first time, I used the ball-park figure of how many codes and themes had been generated in similar qualitative research (Attride-Stirling, 2001). My study aligns with the emergent coding technique, most common to qualitative research. Once codes emerged, I transferred them into a 'coding sheet', I inserted a third column entitled *Text segments (excerpt of narratives)*. I recorded the actual words from the participants (see Table 11), so as to keep interpretation closer to the data and give it greater 'face validity' (Elliott, 2018). A different concern is raised about assigning more than one code to a piece of data. In my study, only one code was assigned to the data, so as not appear 'less trustworthy and less reliable' (Elliott, 2018). This meant that in the thesis, there is no repetition of quotes that may confuse the reader.

## 5.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I initially justified using the approach of thematic analysis according to Attride-Stirling (2001) from stages A to C. The thematic analysis framework was systematically explained for each cohort. I explained in turn the data analysis process for each cohort, providing detailed tables, figures and examples of the coding process. I included a critique of Attride-Stirling's thematic analysis framework (2001) to explain the dilemmas or challenges I faced as a researcher applying this process.

## Chapter 6 Emerging Themes

This chapter discusses the emerging themes found throughout the thematic analysis process in the preceding chapter. The chapter will discuss the emerging themes in the same order initiated so far – the teacher cohort 1 followed by the learner cohorts 2a + b – in order to answer the research questions.

### 6.1 Teacher Cohort 1: Emerging themes

As described in chapter 4, the narrative frame of cohort 1 (see Section 3.1.3), was structured to investigate the ‘pre-service teacher perceptions’ before moving to KSA and the experiences of western women EFL teachers who taught Saudi women in a Saudi HEI. The intercultural challenges in the in-service experience of working in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs are investigated, and the attitudes of western EFL women teachers are explored to identify if ‘othering’ is present in their sociocultural perceptions within their narratives. One of the aims of this research was to investigate the experiences of western women EFL teachers to document any sociocultural misunderstandings that compromise EFL practice. In the process, I aimed to provide experience-based advice on how to deal with such challenges and explore how to equip western women EFL teachers recruited for work positions in Saudi HEIs. This section will now address RQ1–4 posed for the teacher cohort 1:

RQ1 How do western women EFL teachers in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs adapt to KSA?

RQ2 How do western women EFL teachers describe their experiences of working in a Saudi HEI?

RQ3 Why is there a high turnover of western women EFL teachers at Saudi gender-segregated HEIs?

RQ4 What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of western women EFL teachers after teaching English in Saudi HEIs?

As described in chapter 5, in the thematic analysis of the teacher cohort narratives, the global themes describe the impacts of globalisation and English on HE for these teachers. The two emerging themes for this first section are as follows:

- a) Isolation versus integration
- b) Othering versus likeness

In reference to the findings for isolation versus integration, the term isolation is described first, followed by integration.

### **6.1.1 Emerging theme: isolation**

As I explained in Section 3.1.5, the narrative frame of cohort 1 was structured to investigate the 'pre-service teacher perceptions' before moving to KSA and the experiences of teachers who taught at Saudi HEI. The narratives of the teachers were analysed according to three main areas:

- (i) Private life
- (ii) Teaching environment
- (iii) Work environment

#### **i) Private life**

In cohort 1, many of the narratives showed that teachers moved to KSA for various reasons (see Table 6). However, an organising theme was evidenced, that of discontentment in their private lives despite the increased comfort and commodities that may have incentivised their relocation. While the western teachers in the present study were living and working in KSA, they experienced similar obstacles, and they struggled to different degrees. In the narratives, some complained of the lack of 'good service', which they referred to as customer relations in shops or banks in gender-segregated telecommunication depots that served only women. Two western women EFL teachers, Kamilla and Jean, observed that western activities, such as art exhibitions, musical concerts or theatrical events, were missing in their private life, which they defined as 'the lack of cultural events' in the Islamic context. At the time of the study, there were occasional mixed social events available in the embassy district or privately organised for western compounds (no Saudi citizens were permitted entry by law). However, they perceived a general lack of 'western activities' in Saudi societal life. This perception made one teacher, Shelley, feel more alienated from Saudi society. Jean also noted the absence of specific American products, which she considered essentials in her home country. These were observations but showed how they perceived 'hardship' and how it affected their motivation over time. This relates to how 'othering' can be conceptualised as 'us' and 'them' in a very divided sociocultural setting with perceived limitations for sharing a cultural interest. For example, the lived-experiences of gender-segregation or the 'semiotic communication through ideological signs' (Volosinov and Bakhtin, 1973), i.e. signs displaying 'family section', 'male section' in public places; 'Saudi' and 'non-Saudi' access to certain places (e.g. western compounds) and even certain social events. Such restrictions were emphasised in the narratives as restrictions for single western women. It evidences how 'semiotic communication' influences social interaction and how this was perceived by them.

The influence of gender-related restrictions affected the entire teaching cohort, especially in how they adapted their daily life to these social restrictions. For example, a common source of teacher discontent was difficulty with transportation as a woman. At the time of the study, women were not allowed to drive by law, so logistical constraints made their private lives challenging. Kamilla complained that everything had to be pre-planned in accordance with other

western teachers (for shared transport) or through a male taxi driver, which were often unreliable. The lack of independence as single women was voiced as a collective sociocultural challenge of living in KSA.

Gender-segregation in the workplace, their private life and the Saudi lifestyle was challenging. A sociocultural challenge that caused common frustration in their personal lives was the complication of interacting with only women or the restriction over interacting with men. All the participants were single, except Annabel, but her husband did not live with her in Saudi. So, they lived their in-service experience with the strictest observance to Shari'ah laws. When married women, as I did, lived and worked in Saudi HEIs with their husbands, it was easier. As mentioned in the handbook in the relevant section (see Appendix 3, *You should not*, p.176; *Gender-segregation*, p.176; *Restrictions on women in public places*, p.176), they were restricted from male-to-female interactions and limited to a women-only environment even outside work in their living quarters. As unmarried women, all the teachers were housed with other western women EFL teachers shortly after their arrival. Teachers lived either on the campus accommodation provided in the HEI or in agency-provided accommodation. Their flatmate was a complete stranger and shared the apartment.

Participants described the restrictions they experienced as single women and observed that the complete lack of male friendship was unnatural and detrimental to working relations. Two teachers, Joanna and Annabel, complained of 'toxicity' in the female-only departments, while another participant, Kamilla, observed the difficulty in the absence of (platonic) male-to-female interactions in this gender-segregated society. Winifred also found this challenging.

## **ii) Teaching environment**

The descriptions, overall, were negative with occasional positive experiences with their Saudi learners. There were noticeable power dynamics in the EFL workplace (Section 2.1.7) and the close monitoring of western women EFL teachers in accordance with the Orientation Document (Figure 4). These narratives confirmed that there is substantial control over the EFL classroom, which has an impact on the teachers. This control exacerbated the underlying intercultural tensions, as all the teachers remarked on feeling uncomfortable about how to avoid taboo discussions or be cautious of the sociocultural differences in the classroom. As explained earlier, (see section 1.4.3), teacher and student should maintain a 'professional distance', and thus, teachers tried not to 'cross boundaries'. However, teacher-learner interactions were laden with sociocultural tension in the EFL classrooms, as teachers tried their best to teach the language divorced from the sociocultural associations with it. They were expected to dismiss their western 'world view' as culturally inappropriate.

## **iii) Work environment**

Teacher discontent with the working environment beyond the classroom led to an overall sense of frustration. This was felt strongly and directed towards the management of the gender-segregated Saudi HEIs, specifically with the Saudi management in EFL departments and the working life of EFL teachers

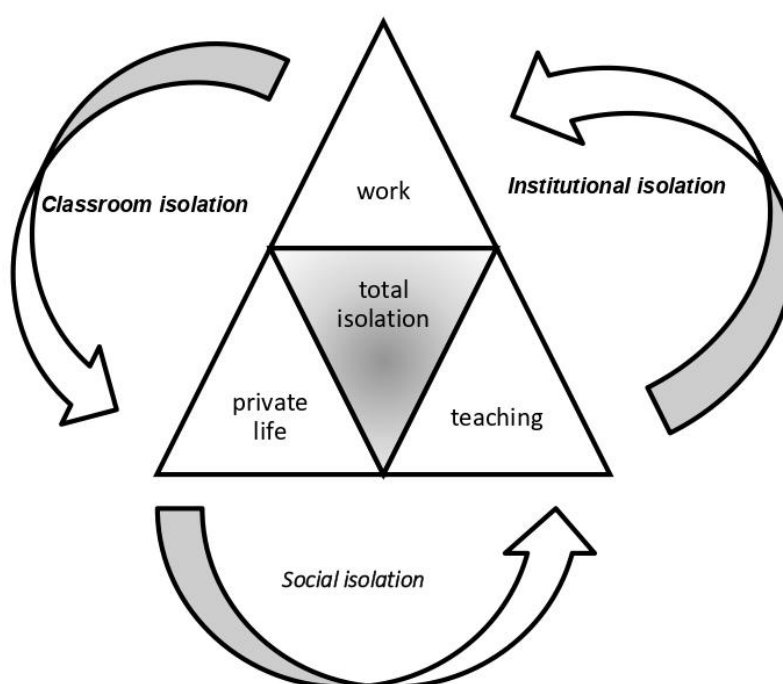
conditioned by hierarchy (see Section 2.2.6) and 'a ladder of communication' (Elyas and Picard, 2010, p. 140). Miscommunication caused by unfamiliarity with high-context culture led to difficulties and increasing levels of frustration in the working life of the teachers. The narratives suggested that this teacher discontent initially led to employee fatigue and eventual burnout. The increased level of isolation felt in their private lives, combined with their classroom isolation, was increased further by this feeling in their workplace (institutional isolation). This sense of total isolation eventually led to their resignation or dismissal, i.e. the teacher contract being terminated by the HEI. All these eight western women EFL teachers, without exception, struggled with work and the institutional isolation.

To better explore the emerging themes of isolation felt by teachers, based on their collective experience, I developed a diagram of findings, Figure 19, to represent cohort 1. The diagram in Figure 19 describes the three organising themes from Stage B and serves to clarify the teacher discontent described in the eight narratives.

- 1) Frustration in private life led to **social isolation**.
- 2) Frustration in teaching led to **classroom isolation**.
- 3) Frustration in work environment led to **institutional isolation**.
- 4) Isolation in all three areas ultimately leads to **total isolation**.

These four concepts of social isolation, classroom isolation, institutional isolation and total isolation in each segment of the triangle will now be explored more thoroughly. The four concepts will be elaborated into a second diagram (Figure 25) in chapter 7.

Figure 24 Diagram of the findings for cohort 1



In Figure 24, above, 'private life' refers to the lifestyle of the teacher outside her workplace. The narratives were examined to see if and how these eight western women EFL teachers adapted to the Saudi lifestyle, the Saudi societal norms and the restrictions on them as western women EFL teachers or, in other words, the cultural differences as well as other aspects.

I now include direct quotations and metaphors taken from the narratives for cohort 1. As the grammar of speech is not the same as that of writing, I will use one font for interviews and a different font for the narratives:

- 'Times new roman' for written narratives (cohort 1 and cohort 2b)
- '*Arial narrow*' (*italic*) for interviews (cohort 2a)

I refer to Appendix 15, which is a table of the thematic excerpts from where the teachers' quotes are taken. As I could not include all eight narratives in the appendices, it intends to give the reader more context to each quote (which is itemised by the number of the section, followed by subsection letter, with corresponding teacher code, e.g. = Appendix 15, <1.c T(NP3)>).

#### **6.1.1.1 Social isolation**

##### **(i) Feeling 'alone'**

Integration into the local context made the teachers feel less alone (integrated [+]) instead of feeling a sense of isolation [-]. The term of 'private life' is used to encompass the teacher's lifestyle in KSA; referring to the sense of identity while integrating into the community. It indicates their social life and their expression of individualism while living as teachers in KSA but not to the work-related contacts or social networks. One participant commented on her private life:

**T(NP3) Jean:** Alone, isolated, a little scared/unsafe, and bored.  
(Appendix 15, <1.c T(NP3)>)

Criticism that there was limited support of western teachers during their initial induction into their HEIs was voiced specifically by one of the teachers, and others observed similar issues indirectly:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** (...) having worked in a few places in my working career I see what a difference a good induction (that continues for at least a week) makes. It would be interesting to know why such a gaping error existed in induction procedures, but it was a huge error on the institution's part (...) These negative and thoughtless omissions I am sure had an effect on my ability to perform as a teacher in the classroom.

##### **(ii) 'Holding oneself back'**

Social isolation is caused when, while adapting to the lifestyle, one does not feel accepted or needs to change fundamental aspects of oneself, which are perceived as a problem. This leads to feeling reduced or judged as a result of societal expectations. Jean explained what 'social isolation' meant in her own words:

**T(NP3) Jean:** I held a lot of myself back so that I could better fit in, to avoid getting fired, deported, or arrested. I never felt safe to fully express my opinions, my creativity, my identity. (Appendix 15, <1.c T(NP3)>)

When a teacher says that she did not feel like herself while leading the Saudi lifestyle, she is admitting she was suffering from feeling reduced by the external environment. She felt as if her self-expression, her individuality was reduced because she had to conform to the norms and expectations required of women living in KSA.

### **(iii) Being 'cautious'**

In the theme of 'social isolation' teachers noted that they also felt unsafe as a result of the constant threat of being fired. This was not due to feeling 'unsafe' in the Saudi society (i.e. crime rate or violence towards women) but being unsafe in a Saudi HEI. This is a significant insight:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** Other western teachers told me to be cautious. Cautious about following the customs, cautious about following the rules and regulations set forth by the University but mostly cautious about speaking about the Saudi religion.

### **(iv) 'Unable to escape'**

Participants Kamilla and Winifred believed gender-segregation to be a problem. Prohibition against socialising as single women was a challenge, but that was not a problem for all participants. This may perhaps be because they were socialising in free zones where mingling with the opposite sex was permitted. The logistical constraints or transportation difficulties in trying to maintain an active social lifestyle contributed to social isolation. Some participants were more proactive in getting out of their routine than others, such as Jane, Cynthia, Annabel and Shelley. However, the others, like Kamilla, felt trapped, saying that it was 'difficult to be spontaneous', and this was attributed to the lack of a healthy social life in the setting and not being 'able to escape' from their housing:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** As a western woman living in KSA I felt over-whelmed. I felt that there was no escape. I do not mean escape from KSA but escape from my apartment. I could not simply go outside, jump in my car and drive away. (Appendix 15, <1.a T(NP6)>)

**T(NP7) Shelley:** As a western woman I felt safe, but slightly frustrated at losing the ability to be spontaneous. Other western teachers told me they felt the same. (Appendix 15, <1.a T(NP7)>)

It was evident across the narratives that social isolation was an issue for these teachers in their private lives, but this challenged them to different degrees. Some teachers did not feel able to cope or adapt to the striking cultural contrasts in KSA as western women, but the majority complained more about the isolation they felt in the classroom and the institution.

### 6.1.1.2 Classroom isolation

#### (i) Don't teach 'outside the box'

In the classroom, pedagogies in this settings are burdened with the restrictions on the sociocultural nature of English. The role of the teacher is a fundamental part of the teaching experience, yet Shelley struggled to implement her EFL approaches and noted that learners were unused to the communicative language approach:

**T(NP7) Shelley:** As far as teaching communicatively was concerned, which is the method I had been taught to use and had always applied, this seemed to be a new thing for the learners, who apparently were used to being lectured to and learning by rote. (Appendix 15, <3.d T(NP7)>)

Shelley, Joanna and Annabel expressed that they felt undermined, and they feared opens discussions with their learners (Appendix 15). Annabel explained the aspects of classroom isolation in their Saudi HEI teaching setting in particular detail:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** I was worried about breaking some cultural code and how I should behave with the students. (Appendix 15, <3.c T(NP2)>)

Annabel and Shelley stated that, as teachers, they were required to unnaturally disassociate from their own western culture because many 'real-life' topics in the IELTS speaking practice were *haram*, i.e. social networking, birthdays, dancing, singing, women driving, love stories, festive holidays, movies or cinema, including mentioning famous Hollywood celebrities, as mentioned earlier in the Orientation Document (Figure 4). The restrictions on these topics challenged experienced EFL teachers in implementing CLT effectively in the classroom and facilitating interactive discussions. As EFL teachers, they also struggled to prepare the learners to attempt proficiency tests, such as the IELTS, where critical thinking and abstract reasoning are expected. Avoiding discussion on these topics limited the opportunity to develop these argumentative skills. This unnatural disassociation from western culture and informal learning creates a social distance in teacher-learner exchanges. It also requires intercultural competence well beyond what is professionally required of EFL and limits creativity.

The sociocultural tension within the classroom causes coldness in the teacher-learner rapport, which compromises the Saudi EFL practice. The EFL teacher switches off creative, communicative skills and teaches without passion. Sadly, in this way, the social interest in teaching dies. A strong EFL teacher-learner rapport is usually created by recounting experiences, but this is missing in this setting. This rapport is essential in contributing to learner and teacher motivation, which makes most EFL teachers proud to be in their classrooms.

Likewise, with informal learning in Saudi learners' lives, such as through cultural globalisation and the effect of digital innovation, was ignored. The Orientation Document refers to 'social networking' as a taboo topic, so EFL teachers ignore their digital usage behaviour completely. Adhering to the sociocultural restrictions inhibits natural rapport building between teacher and learner due to the absence of any discussion about informal learning in their lives as global citizens. In the



classroom, multimodal and audio-visual teaching activities were noticeably absent:

**T(NP7) Shelley:** I found the teaching experience in Saudi different to teaching most places as you are quite limited in what you can discuss and restricted on the materials you are permitted to use. For example, you cannot use music or videos for teaching. (Appendix 15, <3.c T(NP7)>)

The lack of technological tools and digital platforms – the different mediums that promote informal learning in EFL practice worldwide – make the Saudi classroom barren.

The tight control over material inhibits freedom as a teacher to promote discussion; therefore, developing critical thinking or intercultural competence is impossible. There is also an entrenched lack of creativity in EFL practice in Saudi HEIs, as suggested by Annabel:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** One learnt not to teach ‘outside the box’ – just teach the materials given, don’t engage in anything more than this and one would be safe. (Appendix 15, <3.c T(NP2)>)

There was censorship of cultural globalisation in the classroom, reduced agency of the western women EFL teachers, and the EFL teaching itself seemed ‘to lack purpose’. It led to a sense of loneliness in the classroom, where the teacher becomes ‘a factory worker’, mechanically transmitting ‘functional’ English without other a sense of purpose or intrinsic motivation.

## **(ii) Student as ‘informants’**

Teachers in this study tried not to ‘get socially close’ to their learners (integrate into the classroom), as they did not trust the institution and were threatened by consequences. As explained earlier (see Section 2.2.6), the role of the teacher is positioned within a strict educational hierarchy that controls EFL content and especially monitors the role of a teacher to protect and not undermine Islam (Section 1.4.3). Interestingly, Annabel stated that Saudi EFL female learners were perceived by teachers as possible informants if any teacher made a sociocultural mistake. This understandably must make teachers uneasy within their classrooms.

**T(NP2) Annabel:** (...) stories that teachers were sacked for being rude to the students, and if a student complained the teacher might be sacked were fairly frequent; this did not help as one wanted to feel supported and yet one didn’t. (Appendix 15, <3.c T(NP2)>)

This tense intercultural dynamic understandably created ‘classroom isolation’ which refers to feeling threatened by the Saudi HEI and Saudi learners, creating an ‘us versus them’ dynamic. They focussed on adhering to the strict teaching protocol. Classroom isolation entailed a loss of social cohesion and a sense of belonging to a community of learners.

### (iii) Teachers' ethical dilemmas

Teachers were irritated by having to obey strict protocols concerning teacher-learner interactions. Two narratives evidenced the underlying effects of the cultural restrictions on women in HE in KSA and how western women EFL teachers can be put into extremely challenging situations as educators. The narratives showed examples of ethical dilemmas that sometimes teachers had to face. For example, a choice between obeying sociocultural restrictions and not offering counsel to her student or following her own conscience and trying to maintain confidentiality.

She described a situation that transpired with her and one of her learners:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** She said she was gay and had a girlfriend. Student X informed me that she was not allowed to admit that she was gay, as it would mean her death (...) She sat with me for over an hour and cried. (Appendix 15, <2.d T(NP6)>)

Kamilla risked allowing a student to confide in her, disclosing taboo topics that were not allowed to be discussed according to the Orientation Document (see Figure 4).

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** I sat with her and informed her that whatever we discussed in the classroom that day would never leave the classroom. (Appendix 15, <2.d T(NP6)>)

In her narrative, she acknowledged the possible consequences of this and cautiously explained, 'I can do nothing but listen.' Kamilla demonstrated the fundamental importance of cultural competence and the ability to do so with new intercultural awareness without imposing her beliefs:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** Having the chance to teach these ladies in Saudi has been one of the highlights of my career thus far, and the richest of cultural experiences (...) what I learnt from my experience was the importance and rewards of learning and growing through cultural exchange. (Appendix 15, <3.a T(NP6)>)

For example, Cynthia avoided such scenarios:

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** I apologised to her and told her gently that I was not in a position to advise her. (Appendix 15, <2.d T(NP8)>)

Counselling of students went against the faculty handbook regulations, and was, therefore, a considerable risk to employment. If they allowed such disclosure, it meant they were intentionally going against the HEI rules to understand their intercultural landscape.

The level of frustration was particularly high for Annabel when she witnessed her institution justify a course of action that went against the intrinsic values of a teacher:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** Shockingly, the institution's willingness to alter marks to positively reflect poor students' grades do students the greatest disservice. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP2)>)

Generally, one expects teachers, in any field, to give honest, accurate evaluations of their learners' abilities, as this is the fundamental purpose in FL practice and education worldwide. Annabel was concerned about the validity of the final grades, as she was requested to grant marks to reflect 'more positively' on the learners or adjust the overall passing mark for learners. Understandably, she felt that the intrinsic value of her vocation, of meritocracy, was lost. This core value was being intentionally undermined, so Annabel lost all respect for her institution and soon after resigned.

#### **(iv) Teachers as 'factory workers'**

These teachers complained that the HEI institution felt like it quarantined them into manageable 'units' that are individually monitored. Cynthia explained in her narrative that the department she worked in was micro-managed by 'cliquey LTs' (Lead Teachers). At the same time, participants stated that they were being overworked in a highly stressful teaching context. The 'toxicity' referred to earlier by Joanna seriously undermined any social capital that is naturally produced by teamwork. The inaccessibility and unapproachability of the executive decision-makers again limited the professional creativity of the EFL workforce. By virtue of the fact that EFL teachers' constructive suggestions were ignored, these teachers felt excluded and undervalued:

**T(NP4) Joanna:** The main challenge was working 40 hours a week in one place where we were treated like factory workers. (Appendix 15, <2.c T(NP4)>)

At times, some said teachers were punished for voicing 'complaint', as Annabel explained:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** We were basically on our own, and if you went against the system, you'd get kicked out. (Appendix 15, <3.c T(NP2)>)

Annabel mentioned the frustration of dealing with the administration on a personal level while working for the EFL management in a Saudi HEI. Jane explained that the impossible factors in her work environment contributed to her resignation:

**T(NP5) Jane:** In combination with inefficient management, technical support, resources and materials, communication systems and standardisation made for an extremely stressful and unproductive environment. (Appendix 15, <3.e T(NP5)>)

Some participants were highly overworked and unable to handle the expectations of one programme in the institution:

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** The sheer number of learners and the lack of real or practical support (...) policies were being created as an afterthought – possibly because of ignorance, lack of training and planning,

incompetence, lack of self-confidence, fear of backlash, or laziness.  
(Appendix 15, <2.b T(NP8)>)

This lack of professionalism led to a sense of being alone within a broken system that no one could challenge, or more importantly, no one could improve. This situation left experienced, mature, highly qualified western teachers in a state of resignation about their fate, in fear of being fired, and yet feeling trapped in a pointless occupation.

### **6.1.1.3 Institutional isolation**

#### **(i) Autocratic management style**

The hierarchical nature of Saudi education and the socio-historic roots give the higher authority the power to dictate over faculty members and learners alike in a top-down structure. The teachers in this study had extensive experience of working with this managerial system, sometimes for as much as four years, and they adhered to norms on behaviour based on 'the strong Islamic approach', as coined by Argungu (1996) and Zughoul (2003) in the previous sections. The emotional impact of this systemic management style on its teachers is referred to in this study as *institutional isolation*.

Some teachers felt institutional isolation was a consequence of the high-context culture, as referred to previously. This frustration led to miscommunications and resentment towards the 'top-down' managerial system as Kamilla experienced, which ultimately led to her dismissal. The teachers felt they had no voice or involvement in the decision-making. Instead, they had to succumb to the poor management and difficult working conditions without complaint:

**T(NP5) Jane:** For a western women's fate to be so completely out of her hands evoked feelings from quiet uneasiness and discomfort to outbursts of anger and indignation. (Appendix 15, <2.aT(NP5)>)

Jane explained that fellow colleagues also felt disempowered by not being able to complain or express negative emotions. Care must be taken even with constructive criticism in order to improve something related to the work environment or EFL practice as Annabel remembers. Joanna explained that in her workplace, a western women EFL teacher was perceived as impertinent or 'insubordinate' if she approached the management with a complaint; she would be negatively perceived as 'pushy', 'entitled' or 'overly assertive' by the Saudi administration (see Section 2.2.7).

The consequence of all of these factors is to create institutional isolation, which is a feeling of disempowerment that ultimately reduces teachers' capacity to effect positive change in their learners. According to the participants' observations, they felt increasingly alone and powerless 'within the system' because of the autocratic, top-down management. This was noticeable across the narratives; two teachers are chosen here, for brevity, to describe the autocratic management style specifically:

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** Style of management was dictatorial. (Appendix 15, <2.c T(NP8)>)

**T(NP4) Joanna:** The militaristic management style of the managers was somewhat off-putting and insulting. (Appendix 15, <2.c T(NP4)>)

Both teachers admitted that they could no longer identify with their vocation to teaching, or their role as a teacher in the confines of the classroom and within their institution. In teaching practice, generally, teachers are motivated to take on roles as mentors or as coaches to their learners, but this role in EFL teaching in this setting was heavily curtailed.

#### **6.1.1.4 Total isolation**

##### **(i) 'I couldn't stand it'**

The impact of institutional isolation was particularly evident in the narratives. However, 'total isolation' in this study was found in only three teachers' narratives, those of Kamilla, Jean and Joanna. It refers to the summation of isolation felt in all three spheres of the teachers' lives. Their private lives, their teaching experience in the classroom, their work-life experience in the Saudi HEI all contributed to a sense of total isolation. The feeling of total isolation could not be compensated for financially or materially. Eventually, when their discontent and frustration with all three aspects of their lives became so critical, a resignation or contract termination ensued shortly. These narratives displayed indignation towards 'the system', inside which they felt powerless, unable to improve EFL practice and most noticeably when 'the system' was directly at odds with their ideological worldview or intrinsic ethical values. Jean summed this up:

**T(NP3) Jean:** I left KSA in June of 2014 because I couldn't stand to be there any longer. (Appendix 15, <3.b T(NP3)>)

Jean attributed her feelings of total isolation to the differences in 'Saudi as a country' 'as a whole' (othering), resigning herself to the perceived hardships, such as restrictions for women and, thereby, becoming even more socially isolated. As both Jean and Joanna explained, the emotional frustration was too much, and they had lost purpose as a teacher:

**T(NP4) Joanna:** Living in Saudi was overall very interesting although seriously marred by the exhaustion and purposelessness of the job. (Appendix 15, <2.c T(NP4)>)

Moreover, at times, it was extremely challenging to balance the distant teacher role according to Saudi HEI regulations and one's vocation as a teacher. For example, when a Saudi woman EFL learner disclosed her sexual orientation as a lesbian, which is forbidden to be discussed as it is classified as a taboo, Kamilla was rightly concerned about the consequences of counselling her student. While she felt compelled to help her, as any good educator would, she feared the risk to her job. In fact, her contract was terminated, although it was left unexplained as to why. This was an example of what is termed as 'blacklisted' in the vernacular of the western teachers. If it refers to being perceived as 'unfit for service' in the context of KSA:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** I left in April 2012 because I opened my mouth to speak when [it] should have stayed shut and listened. The University cancelled my contract

after I wrote them an email about the deficiencies I witnessed at the university on a daily basis; administration inaccuracies and injustices. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP6)>)

## **(ii) Resignations**

This section provides documented qualitative support for the claim that there are 'excessive turnover rates' of foreign faculty members from Saudi HEIs (Badry and Willoughby, 2015, p. 167). I now explore the turnover of western women EFL teachers in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs. One research aim was to explore the experience of teachers and the possible causes for the high turnover of foreign faculty in Saudi HEIs. In stating why each western EFL teacher in this study left their HEI, an insider perspective is provided. This section now presents the extent of the problem and summarises why teacher cohort 1 resigned.

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** 14 resignations from the programme in that semester, mine was the 15th. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP8)>)

Winifred, Annabel, Jane, Shelley and Cynthia resigned due to institutional isolation, but they had been able to adapt to the sociocultural context of the Saudi society in their private lives, and their descriptions were rich with cultural interests and hobbies. They found ways to meet the challenges and seemed to integrate well into the community in their private lives. Despite dealing with the same challenges and struggles of their professional lives in their private lives, they compensated for these through social integration.

In contrast, Jean, Kamilla and Joanna left KSA due to total isolation. While some instances suggested that they had managed to integrate, these experiences were fleeting, and the overall isolation in their private and work life within the institution restricted their sense of self. For example, Jean explained in her own words:

**T(NP3) Jean:** I'm not fit for Saudi. (Appendix 15, <3.b T(NP3)>)

Jean disclosed that she found out her contract would not be renewed by the institution. She described how she felt in the Saudi HEI and classroom:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** I was anti-social (...) I became a hermit, and it took several months (after leaving) before I felt normal again. (Appendix 15, <2.c T(NP6)>)

One of the aims of this research was to investigate the attitudes of western women EFL teachers and identify if the pre-service sociocultural perceptions and 'othering' (Said, 1978) processes are present within their narratives. Table 16, is the overview of resignations for cohort 1, as interpreted and reported from the cohort 1 narratives.

Table 16 Turnover of western women EFL teachers in this study

Code & pseudonyms	Reason for leaving KSA	Data Analysis
<b>T(NP1)</b> <b>Winifred</b>	<b>Resigned:</b> due to the discontent with management in her Saudi HEI; she would return to KSA if better prospects in a different (private) company were possible; enjoyed KSA	<i>institutional isolation</i>
<b>T(NP2)</b> <b>Annabel</b>	<b>Resigned:</b> due to her chronic discontent with management in her HEI for two years; enjoyed KSA	<i>institutional isolation</i>
<b>T(NP3)</b> <b>Jean</b>	<b>Non-renewal:</b> resigned from the institution due to chronic discontent in her private life; discontent with teaching; discontent with her Saudi HEI	<i>total isolation</i>
<b>T(NP4)</b> <b>Joanna</b>	<b>Resigned:</b> she lost all interest in teaching; she was very critical of her Saudi HEI; discontent in her private life; she no longer wanted to live in KSA	<i>total isolation</i>
<b>T(NP5)</b> <b>Jane</b>	<b>Non-renewal:</b> discontent with mismanagement issues in her EFL programme; the unreasonable workload; increasing levels of discomfort in her workplace; enjoyed KSA	<i>institutional isolation</i>
<b>T(NP6)</b> <b>Kamilla</b>	<b>Contact terminated:</b> discontent in her private life; it took her a long time to recover from her teaching experience in KSA.	<i>total isolation</i>
<b>T(NP7)</b> <b>Shelley</b>	<b>Resigned:</b> did not like her HEI, but hoped to return to a different workplace in KSA; enjoyed KSA	<i>institutional isolation</i>
<b>T(NP8)</b> <b>Cynthia</b>	<b>Resigned:</b> enjoyed KSA for four years; increasingly discontent with management problems in the EFL programme; acknowledged burnout due to the EFL management in her HEI; the increasing levels of institutional isolation led to her resignation	<i>institutional isolation</i>

### 6.1.2 Emerging theme: Integration

In reference to the global theme, integration versus isolation, the term integration is now explored. The first aim was to explore how western women EFL teachers ‘acculturate’ (Wright, 2005) to this sociocultural setting of the Saudi EFL placement. ‘Integration’ refers to the capacity to create a sense of belonging, a sense of community within a foreign culture. How participants adapted to the lifestyle was measured in their narratives by how effectively they could compensate for the sense of isolation they may have felt, for example, isolation in their workplace. This was evident in how they adapted to the Saudi lifestyle and advised future teachers arriving to work in Saudi HEIs.

#### (i) ‘A rich tapestry’

Jane and Cynthia both used the metaphor, ‘tapestry’ to describe their experience of integrating into Saudi society and experiencing its culture:

**T(NP5) Jane:** As in all cultures, I encountered a wide spectrum of beliefs, preferences, personalities, capabilities, adventurousness, talents, ideals, styles, that made up the rich tapestry of society’s women. (Appendix 15, <7.f T(NP5)>)

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** My experiences, personal and professional, have added unimagined richness to the tapestry of my life. (Appendix 15, <7.f T(NP8)>)

#### (ii) Social connections

Participants found other outlets that compensated for the discontent in their lives. Integration into the local community in their free time was considered an indicator

that they were acculturating sufficiently to the cultural differences. A few examples are creating a social network or having hobbies beyond their female-only work-related community. From the narratives, Winifred, Annabel, Jane, Shelley and Cynthia sublimated the negativity into doing something 'socially useful', such as artistic, cultural and intellectual pursuits:

**T(NP5) Jane:** I was surprised to learn about the many activities available for expats, including Latin dance classes and socials, and Hash House Harriers gatherings, which I immediately joined. (Appendix 15, <7.f T(NP5)>)

An example was Annabel endeavouring to stay socially engaged through clubs (e.g. choral singing) and by participating in these social events, effectively removing herself from the 'toxic negativity' she felt at work:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** (...) quickly one needed to also escape all the other staff at weekends and evenings and see other folk (...) not be surrounded by work matters at all times. (Appendix 15, <7.f T(NP2)>)

### **(iii) Cultural immersion**

Jane and Cynthia shared how they acculturated through a sense of belonging, growing a sense of community within a foreign culture. Despite the individual isolation the participants experienced, some actively sought to create a social network beyond their western colleagues, and only then attitudes about the culture changed. They reacted to the discomfort in their situation in different ways by being 'an anthropological observer of oneself' as an EFL practitioner. In witnessing their personal sociocultural reactions to the Saudi context, Jane and Cynthia were particularly good at using the negative stimulus, to re-evaluate their sociocultural assumptions. The isolation felt in their work, and the institution was used to energise artistic, cultural or intellectual pursuits, such as learning Arabic. In this way, their discontent was more easily contained.

Jane befriended Saudi women, became more socially integrated into Saudi circles, thereby understanding Saudi society through intercultural events:

**T(NP5) Jane:** I thought that relocating to this Islamic setting would be interesting because I find living in a country (as opposed to travelling through as a tourist or reading about it) gives you so many opportunities to witness and participate in the culture in an authentic way, develop relationships with local people and learn the language and dispel myths or clarify preconceptions about the country and culture that family, friends, and acquaintances (or I) may hold.

Jane, Jean, and Winifred demonstrated that once they befriended Saudis and connected socially to the context, their teaching practice was greatly enriched. Participants who got to know their learners at an individual level felt enormously rewarded, which led to a sense of purpose in EFL teaching:

**T(NP5) Jane:** In the end, I learned as much from them as they did from me about teaching and about Saudi culture. On no occasion did I feel judged, or not



respected for my different culture, religion, and life choices. (Appendix 15, <3.a.T(NP5)>)

**T(NP3) Jean:** I really like that I am making a difference. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP3)>)

**T(NP1) Winifred:** I feel very privileged to have become good friends with some Saudi women and their families. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP1)>)

**T(NP6) Jane:** I was willing to live with each, and every restriction imposed upon me for this feeling I was experiencing (Appendix 15, <3.a T(NP6)>)

These participants demonstrated the importance of building teacher-learner rapport by getting to know Saudi learners personally. This compensated for the social isolation in the private life of Jane and Cynthia, whose understanding of their Saudi EFL female learners personally became a source of positivity. Interestingly, the participants who integrated more easily into the Saudi community made networks outside the HEI rather than investing in the workplace with the Saudi faculty members.

Examples of social integration were evident in Annabel's narrative as she actively sought to understand cultural issues through Saudi acquaintances, learning the language and uncovering the culture as a tutor to a Saudi family. Jane outlined the importance of creating social networks in the local culture, not remaining in the 'western bubble' of only western colleagues:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** I tried to benefit from being in such a wonderfully different environment and also to assuage not having the family support network around me by joining a couple of societies to build up a social life outside work. (Appendix 15, <2.e T(NP2)>)

Some EFL teachers, such as Jane, Cynthia and Annabel recommended different ways of integrating within Saudi culture by socialising with Saudi women in cultural events, such as handicraft markets, befriending Saudi women outside the HEI, attending Saudi weddings as well as engaging in Arabic–English language exchanges. These participants sought opportunities to ask Saudi women directly about their culture, freedom, interests and religious perspectives. This social integration of these western women EFL teachers helped in the classroom, as it enabled them to be more self-reflective practitioners within the sociocultural context, and they re-evaluated their worldview more effectively than before. Their intercultural awareness built evident themes of positive regard within the classroom and led to the better social integration of them as EFL teachers. Social integration helped strengthen their fragile teaching rapport with their Saudi learners; therefore, despite the restrictions and the challenges, they enjoyed teacher-learner interactions. It increased their awareness and acceptance of the differences in their classrooms and also decreased what could be termed an orientalist standpoint. This could be an area for further investigation into cultural interest as a driving factor for teacher motivation. They hoped to understand Saudi culture from within and accomplishing that sense of integration.

### 6.1.3 *Emerging theme: Othering*

I stated earlier that the sociocultural divisions between the East and the West are not new, having been referred to in works on Orientalism (Said, 1978; 1994) and subsequent research on racism, prejudice and islamophobia (van Dijk, 1987; Abu-Lughod, 2001; Nurullah, 2010) (see Section 2.2.4.1). I also referred to the stereotypes concerning women and Arab women (Mishra, 2007) being exacerbated on mainstream media channels.

For the purpose of this section, the nation or hometown will be referred to before the participant's code and pseudonym. This detail aims to provide a sociocultural context for the attitude and viewpoint of each teacher in order to outline the teacher's pre-service attitude. Sociocultural background not only refers to the country of origin but also the influence of the teachers' friends and relatives in each case, that is those who may have influenced the teacher with their reactions.

When investigating sociocultural attitudes, the global theme of 'likeness versus othering' was constructed through the careful consideration of its basic themes, which were then categorised into three main organising themes:

- (a) [-] or [+] pre-service attitudes
- (b) [-] or [+] pre-conceptions of Saudi society
- (c) [-] or [+] attitudinal changes in teachers post service

The negative pre-service attitudes towards KSA were noticeable across the teacher narratives. The narrative frame neutrally elicited the sociocultural perceptions of KSA before these EFL teachers relocated there. However, the narratives concentrated on the exposure to politicised rhetoric in mainstream media or factual information they had received as well as common perceptions of the KSA, most of which are negative. The negative influence of cultural globalisation through mainstream media portrayals of Arab women has been presented in earlier discussions in (see Section 2.2.4).

#### **(i) Ethnocentrism**

Ethnocentrism, as explained earlier, (see Section 2.2.4) here refers to how the teachers' tendency was found to view their own group being the centre of everything and to judge Saudi culture and Saudi people, based on their own standards (Lin and Rancer, 2003). The narratives described varying degrees of ethnocentrism felt by friends and relations in their hometowns towards Saudi culture, especially Saudi men and the Arab culture.

**T(NP2) Annabel:** (England) The mysterious people and culture, so alien to a middle-class English life. I felt I was walking into an abyss.

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** (Canada) They believed that all Muslims hated Christians. A barbaric, backward nation of religious fiends.

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** (England) I thought this Islamic setting would be scary and more confining but only because of articles I had read and movies I had seen.

**T(NP7) Shelley:** (America) KSA is seen as a scary place ... one in which if you enter, you may never be able to leave again. It is demonised in the news.

(Appendix 15, 3a-c)

The narratives showed how ethnocentric or othering rhetoric in the home press and on mainstream media promulgates stereotypes, prejudice and judgements of Saudi culture by depicting the Saudi women as 'victims of their society'. The pre-service perceptions of Saudi women were mostly negative (Appendix 15, < sections 4, 5>):

**T(NP3) Jean:** (America) They were victims.

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** (Canada) They hold a lower position, status, and regard than men, women lived insufferable lives.

**T(NP1) Winifred:** (New Zealand) One of repression and subservience.

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** (England) Institutionalised repression of women.

**T(NP4) Joanna:** (Scotland) poor downtrodden souls

Participants also disclosed that their colleagues in their new Saudi workplace had an 'us' and 'them' mindset and ethnocentric attitudes about the work ethic of Saudi colleagues (Appendix 15, <5.c >):

**T(NP5) Jane:** (Canada) Other western teachers told me it was a test of patience working with Saudis because of a different and generally less-developed work ethic.

The participants also disclosed that their motivation to teaching Saudi women was in fact based on the cultural superiority in media discourses regarding stereotypes of Saudi women and the underlying message that there was a need for western intervention to 'save them' (Appendix 15, <5.c >):

**T(NP3) Jean:** (America) I hoped I might be of help. Young ladies' lives were controlled by family, culture and religion and that education was perhaps one step in the direction of some form of freedom.

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** (England) The country's women who had traditionally and for too long been kept in educational purdah.

## **(ii) Sociocultural changes after teaching**

An interesting finding was how the participants of the study changed their pre-service attitudes through cultural immersion after teaching EFL there for over a year. After leaving the country, in retrospect, the participants observed that the othering rhetoric is pervasive in the home press about KSA, intentionally concentrating on the pejorative aspects with limited neutral commentary on the lives of ordinary citizens. Changes in their attitudes towards Saudi women and towards Saudi men were evident in the texts (Appendix 15).

Post-service attitudes showed that the perceptions had changed about the Saudi lifestyles, Saudi citizens, Islam and attitudes about KSA in general. Post-service attitudes were noticeably more positive towards the end of the narratives, showing that after their cultural immersion in KSA, the participants felt differently about many aspects that they had witnessed first-hand. Specifically, the pre-service attitudes changed after getting to know Saudi women and their lifestyles better.

There was a tendency of these western women to initially perceive the local value systems through the lens of ethnocentric feminism, but later a respect formed out of recognition of diversity:

**T(NP1) Winifred:** (New Zealand) If I could give advice to female western women going to teach in here, I would say changes are happening from within. Saudi women are fiercely independent and nationalistic. They don't appreciate westerners criticising their life style and culture which is uniquely linked to their religion. When in Rome, let the Romans do their own thing. (Appendix 15, <8.f>).

The perception of 'rescuing Saudi women' through teaching was re-evaluated:

**T(NP4) Joanna:** (Scotland) From the Saudi women who I met, I learnt that the western model is not to be applied. (Appendix 15, <7a T(NP3) >)

Annabel, as a private tutor for the young daughter of a Saudi family, became socially integrated with a Saudi family in a personal way. This helped her re-examine the gender roles of Saudi men and women in the host family better. She observed independence and the 'formidable' matriarchal role of the Saudi woman whose children she taught privately:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** (England) Women are strident, confident and definitely a force to be reckoned with in their homes. (Appendix 15, <7.b T(NP2)>)

However, the adjustment of pre-service attitudes to the first-hand experience depended on the extent of social integration into the Saudi community. Selected participants acknowledged not successfully integrating into the Saudi society or understanding aspects of their life.

**T(NP4) Joanna:** (Scotland) Saudi women are difficult to get to know, and I wish I could have got more insight into their country and society. (Appendix 15, <7a T(NP4) >)

Joanna claimed that other western women EFL teachers apply traditional feminist models to the Saudi context as she herself did. She argued that westerners working in EFL need to be wary of the pre-conceived notions of the Saudi culture from secondary sources.

Jane added that EFL teachers need 'to be more courageous' in integrating as much as possible with the local culture, finding authentic situations that challenge these notions by learning the local language and by getting to know Saudi

women personally. In striking contrast, Jean advised other western women simply not to bother going to KSA at all:

**T(NP3) Jean:** (America) I strongly advise other women not to apply. If I could give advice to female western women going to teach there, I would say, ‘Go to Bahrain, Qatar, the U.A.E., or Oman!’ (Appendix 15, <8f T(NP3)>)

Winifred advised westerners to be more open-minded in dealing with the cultural differences in the Arab world:

**T(NP5) Jane:** (Canada) Keep an open mind at all times, engage in society, befriend Saudi women, be cautious and respectful but also take some small risks to test the waters of openness. (Appendix 15, <8.f>).

The participants suggested that western attitudes towards non-western norms and different cultural or religious paradigms could lead to being more closed-minded than expected. Western prejudice and stereotypes towards the Saudi culture were evidenced in the participants’ narratives.

The perceptions pertaining to Saudi men changed too. This was a significant aspect of the narratives for Kamilla and Winifred. The previously perceived misogyny and injustice in Saudi society were re-negotiated to align Kamilla’s perspective more closely with her own first-hand experience:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** (Canada) There are so many gender issues, I do not know where to start, but one thing that I witnessed, and it surprised me, is that the Saudi fathers truly love their daughters. (Appendix 15, <7.b >):

**T(NP1) Winifred:** (New Zealand) My perception of Saudi men was not correct. I realised my perception of how Saudi husbands treat their wives was also incorrect.

One of the overall findings of this study shows that othering in the Saudi EFL placement, even if somewhat hidden, arises from residual teachers’ attitudes and perceptions of KSA before relocation, which are influenced by mainstream media. However, it was also demonstrated that these mindsets change through intercultural immersion if teachers can ‘get under the skin’ and get to know the local culture first-hand.

#### **6.1.4 Emerging theme: Likeness**

‘Likeness’, as opposed to othering, I define here as *a feeling of gender-based affinity towards women of a different ethnic group*. I used the label ‘likeness’ to classify feelings, thoughts and perceptions that denote a change in the narrator’s position, from that of superior or hostile stance towards the host culture (see Section 2.2.4) to one that perceives ‘the other’ as similar to oneself. Likeness was labelled when the participant emphasised similarities rather than differences between the ‘home culture’ (her own culture) and the ‘host culture’ (i.e. Saudi men, Saudi women and Saudi society) in her narrative; when her language choice used descriptive devices that positioned ‘the other’ as equal to herself, thereby normalising actions, customs and ways of being as less ‘foreign’, ‘alien’

or 'strange'. Hence, she became more accepting of the differences in the host culture (i.e. values, ideologies and behaviours) through feeling 'likeness' (e.g. 'she is *like* me') or affinity.

Initially, the host culture was perceived with an attitude of othering. However, the post-service attitudes showed that such stereotypes had been challenged by first-hand experience. Overall, as evidenced in the narratives, all eight participants perceived the host culture in a more positive way after their teaching experience. By living and working in KSA, their prior attitudes towards Saudi men, Saudi women and Saudi society were significantly changed, as they reported moments of 'cultural awakening' or surprise. These situations with the Saudi women they met changed their attitude and an increased sense of commonality emerged. They began perceiving Saudi women as equals rather than reinforcing the orientalist viewpoint as described earlier (see Section 2.2.4). In understanding the host culture better, they did not impose the western feminist model; instead, from an insider's perspective, they accepted cultural differences while remaining on neutral or non-judgemental ground. I have selected diverse quotes from participants across cohort 1 to support how 'likeness' was evident in different ways.

For example, Kamilla openly acknowledges how teachers come with preconceived ideas of Saudi women and society, and she explains how experience challenges these attitudes:

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** My teaching experience in KSA was interesting because it showed me that we all have set perceptions and ideas about certain topics; and we believe that our perceptions are true and believable, but then we are put in circumstances and situations that prove us wrong. (Appendix 15, <7d T(NP3)>)

These quotes are used to show the 're-negotiated' perspectives of cohort 1 after their cultural immersion:

**T(NP2) Annabel:** On returning to the UK, I am fascinated even more by KSA, as I come away with some understanding and appreciation of the culture, but probably more questions than I went with. (Appendix 15, <7d>)

Annabel shows a depth of cultural awareness and openmindedness towards the host culture; her feelings after returning home sharply contradict what she felt prior to leaving for KSA: stepping into an abyss.

Jean was aware of the complexity of cultural conformity in a society of strict norms and customs, and recognises that there are cultural layers which challenge those simplistic stereotypes she held onto prior to her teaching experience:

**T(NP3) Jean:** I realised then and there that the conformity is about appearances. What many of the citizens of KSA do privately, out of the

watchful eyes of others, and what many prefer to do, is very different than the image portrayed.

Initially she perceived Saudi women as 'victims', who were in need of her help. Instead she later perceives them as equals, without the condescending stance of 'rescuing' them as women.

**T(NP1) Winifred:** Of course as with all couples in any country, the face presented to the public can often be different to the private one.

Winifred's usage of a generalisation about couples 'demystifies' and normalises the relationship between Saudi men and women, which is often a central criticism in western rhetoric. She previously thought the relationship between a Saudi man and woman was based on '*subservience*' and '*repression*'. Instead, after meeting Saudi families and Saudi women, she renegotiates this perception of Saudi couples to a concept of likeness, perceiving Saudis as a 'normal' couple. This shift in perception is striking because it challenges stereotypical viewpoints and prejudice. These stereotypes are changed into something she sees as familiar and common-place.

**T(NP4) Joanna:** My understanding about Saudi women was that they were poor down-trodden souls but after this experience I think many are proud, refined, beautiful, poised, gracious and measured.

Likewise, Joanna's quote shows a change in using patronising language, '*poor*', '*down-trodden*' to carefully chosen compliments, such as '*proud*' and '*poised*'. This changes the subject from being in a lower position to the narrator, and instead elevates the subject to equal or higher status, reinforcing the links of solidarity between them as women. This shift in perception is striking because it deconstructs the stereotypical attitude of pity. It fosters gender-based affinity to other women grounded in mutual respect, (i.e. perceiving the other as an equal, not perceived as 'weaker' or in need of rescuing).

Similarly, while Joanna uses compliments, Cynthia uses abstract nouns that she chooses to positively describe Saudi women:

**T(NP8) Cynthia:** My experiences, personal and professional, have added unimagined richness to the tapestry of my life. Perhaps one way of conveying my understanding of Saudi women is to give examples of the Saudi women I had taught, and let readers of my narrative draw their own conclusions: orthodoxy, rebellion, hunger, dynamism, religiosity, pragmatism, passion, generosity - they are all there.

Interestingly, Cynthia's choice of abstract nouns here challenges the more stereotypical abstract nouns usually associated with Saudi women in mainstream media.

Joanna's perception of her L2 Saudi learners also reinforces this concept of 'likeness' in the classroom, because she perceives them as being similar to L2

learners elsewhere, thus demystifying the Oriental romanticism that is usually associated with Saudi Arabian lifestyles:

**T(NP4) Joanna:** Just nice girls, like anywhere in the world

**T(NP5) Jane:** I found my Saudi learners to be (...) more worldly than I had expected (..)

Jane, above, was positively surprised that her L2 Saudi learners were more worldly which challenged her ideas of Saudi women being insular, protected and unaware of many of the global trends.

She explains later stating:

**T(NP5) Jane:** I was delighted and surprised to meet such women who made me revise my beliefs[stereotypes] (...) After this experience, I can reflect on how many times I was surprised and proven wrong.

Jane recognised that by being 'proven wrong', through an authentic intercultural experience, she understood more about Saudi women and this brought her a sense of gender-based affinity with them. In fact, she puts herself in the weaker position of 'learning from' rather than 'knowing all', which demonstrates a recognition of mutuality in the acculturation process. In openly accepting her feelings, thoughts and attitudes may be wrong and changing them accordingly, she brings greater self-awareness to her role as an educator. This shows how cultural immersion can help foster intercultural competence.

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** My understanding about Saudi women was that they were captive to their country, culture and religion but after this experience I think that Saudi women do not have it as bad as the outside world believes.

Kamilla, in her pre-service attitude described the society as a '*backward nation of religious fiends*' and Saudis as '*barbaric*'. After her cultural immersion as a teacher, she described Saudis with moderate language. She recognised the difference between the 'image' portrayed in mainstream media and the cultural reality she experienced was very different. The duality between these two perceptions enforced her to renegotiate her beliefs and thus increase her cultural awareness.

Overall, the teachers' post-service perspectives were not as intolerant of Islam as they had been pre-service. Instead, they regarded Saudi women as well-cared for materially, emotionally and practically; not 'downtrodden' or oppressed 'victims' as previously perceived. There was also recognition of the positive role of religion in their lives.

**T(NP2) Annabel:** I still after two years am slightly mystified as to the culture and religion, but what I think the religion in particular gives to Arab women is a strong discipline and a strong support system – it seems to me there are clear definitions as to the responsibilities of men and



women in KSA; this in a way is refreshing, and gives a clear structure to these peoples' lives.

Similarly, the Saudi lifestyle was appreciated, if not in some instances envied, for the way it supports its Muslim women in practical ways with chauffeurs and servants, who make gender roles such as wives and mothers less onerous. As Muslim women, they are entitled to the provision of both material and practical means by their *mahrams* (see Section 1.3.3.2), and therefore, a majority of the teachers observed how they have a very high standard of living. For some participants, a significant sociocultural change was specifically their attitude towards Saudi men. In 'pre-service' sections of the narratives, Saudi men were vilified while after the experience, Saudi men were much more highly regarded, for being 'caring' and 'loving' husbands and fathers, considered 'heros' by their women, as one teacher commented

**T(NP6) Kamilla:** The Saudi father will support his daughter all her life, even after she is married. The father will continue to give his daughter monetary support. Another thing that I observed is when I asked my students to write an essay about their hero, choosing anyone dead or alive in the world, the majority chose their fathers.

Many of the 'pre-service' attitudes and perspectives rested on perceived disadvantage, difference and distance caused by 'us' and 'them' constructs, i.e. othering. Whereas, when the perceptions of Saudi women's identity were not conforming into these rigid stereotypes, a new position of 'likeness' emerged in cohort 1, that of normalising, accepting, and acknowledging the other's cultural values and behaviour as similar to our own. This section showed how the teaching experiences were enriched by cultural immersion; as their primary experiences contradicted the stereotypes and prejudices they had before emigrating.

## 6.2 Learner Cohort 2a+b: Emerging themes

This is the final stage of the six-step thematic analysis framework (Stage C) for the cohort of Saudi women EFL learners. The thematic analysis was explored previously in chapter 5; I refer here to the thematic analysis framework (see Table 10, Section 5.1.1). The thematic analysis for 2a+b drew together the global themes of the narratives and interviews of Saudi EFL female learners (see Appendix 14). In order to describe the sociocultural impacts of English and globalisation on the women in HE in KSA this section will link the thematic analysis already discussed to RQ5–7 posed for cohort 2a+b.

RQ5 How is English perceived and used in practical ways by Saudi women EFL learners?

RQ6 How is globalisation understood and experienced by Saudi women EFL learners in KSA?

RQ7 What are the changes in sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women EFL learners after learning English?

The findings are described for each cohort by alternating from learner cohort 2a's interviews to learner cohort 2b's narratives, according to the logical sequencing of the argument. The three emerging themes for this section are:

- a) Empowerment versus linguistic imperialism
- b) Transformation versus exclusion
- c) Likeness versus othering (Saudi EFL female learners)

As explained earlier, I will use one font for interviews (cohort 2a): '*Arial narrow*' (*italic*) and a different font for the narratives (cohort 1 and cohort 2b): times new roman.

### **6.2.1 Emerging theme: Empowerment**

This section describes the second part of the emerging theme, 'empowerment versus linguistic imperialism', that answers RQ5: how is English perceived and used in practical ways by Saudi women EFL learners? In cohort 2a+b metaphors emerged to answer RQ5. The emerging theme drew out six metaphors, which will be discussed in turn to support the emerging theme 'empowerment'.

#### **6.2.1.1 Perceptions of English**

The learners recognised the global status of English, they do not perceive their own language as any less important. In their interviews, Faridah and Ibtisam remarked that Arabic was more important than English, not because it was their mother tongue but because it is the language of the Qu'ran:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *One of the reasons I always wanted to learn it because it's a worldwide language you can use it anywhere. Well, of course, Arabic is my language, it's my 'culture language'. It's how I speak with my friends, my family, my future children. So, it's more important to me maybe because of the religious side: it's the Holy Qu'ran's language. It has a stronger value to me, but I can't live without English either. English is very, very important to me personally. I feel like if I travel, if I can go anywhere, I would be lost without it.*

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *Arabic is more important obviously because it's my mother language. It's the language of my people, of my culture ... It's very important. It's the language of Islam, and it's the language the Holy Qu'ran is in.*

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *For me, I think English is as important as my Arabic. Why? Because a lot of people speak English, and I can understand other people, other countries or other cultures. I can connect with them.*

#### **6.2.1.2 English as a 'childhood friend'**

The first metaphor is 'a childhood friend'. Participants Maysoon, Arwa, Aliyah and Sabiha shared their life stories before learning English; it showed how influential English was in their childhood and how English influenced their academic aspirations. In learner cohort 2b, the Saudi women EFL learners in their narratives explained that they perceived the acquisition of English as a goal and

focussed on the realisation of their ambitions to become fluent. In their narratives, participants Maysoon, Arwa, Aliyah and Sabiha shared a sense of accomplishment in achieving their goals:

**S(NP3) Sabiha:** I thought English was of a great help, ‘my childhood friend’, because by using which I would have more options I wouldn’t have and would have access to uncharted territories of knowledge, that I wouldn’t have had access to by using my mother tongue only.

**S(NP7) Maysoon:** When I was little, not only did I want to learn English, but I also wanted to study it as a major as well. I knew from a very young age that I wanted to be a translator when I grew up. Learning languages, aside from my own, has always been a huge goal of mine.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** When I was little, I wanted to learn English because my cousins are half Americans. I used to hear them speaking with their mother in English all the time, and I always wondered ‘why can’t I understand what they are saying?’

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** When I was little, I wanted to learn English because no one around me knew English very well.

The metaphor Sabiha used to describe English was that of a ‘childhood friend’, showing that her personal attachment to the English language was deeply psychological and how English became central to her identity formation as she graduated at the time of this study, as a bilingual English-Arabic translator. This study showed that English was positively perceived by these learners from an early age, and by their family members who encouraged them to become bilingual.

### 6.2.1.3 English: as ‘a passport’

The second metaphor is ‘a passport’. Learner cohort 2a’s interviews focussed on the gender-related impact English has on their lives, their community and the Saudi society. Ibtisam used ‘a passport’ which is particularly insightful, seeing as, at the time of the study, there were gender-based restrictions on women driving, travelling alone, and leaving the country needed a male guardian as women were expected to be accompanied by their *mahrams* (see Section 1.3.3.2). In their interviews, English was perceived as ‘a passport’. This metaphor clearly explains just how important English is for her and for Saudi women:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** ...it’s like ‘a passport’. It’s like being aware of everything around you.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** As a Saudi woman, let’s say I’m travelling with my father or my husband. By speaking another language, English, I don’t have to rely on him to translate for me. I can go wherever I want and speak for myself. I trust myself, and so I have more confidence.

**S(NP7) Maysoon:** English makes you have this sense of independence.

English was shown to be used in gender-related ways, i.e. increasing their independence when travelling. Therefore, this metaphor is very carefully chosen by Ibtisam, but representative for some of the others who felt similarly.

#### 6.2.1.4 English: as ‘an international key’

The third metaphor is ‘an international key’. In her interview, Ibtisam recognised that English elevates the social status and increases the social influence of Saudi women because it is perceived as an indicator of education and used as ‘an international key’:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *People who know how to speak English here are more respected ... I think it's more than a language. It's like an 'international key' for communication.*

This was reiterated by other participants who also recognised how English elevates their social status and professional influence as Saudi women. This emerging theme shows that English is perceived as a way of increasing female independence and, therefore, connected to empowerment.

#### 6.2.1.5 English: ‘she’s smart’

In their interviews, a fourth association was found, that a woman who speaks English is said to be perceived as more educated, smarter or more professional:

**S(IP4) Ruqayyah:** *Let's say ten years ago people, if I spoke English, people would think 'wow!' like I must be really smart!' –It was unusual when you spoke another language fluently; they will think you're really educated. So, it has a status.*

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *When I see Saudi woman speaking English really fluently, I think she's like, really smart!*

Ibtisam explained how she is perceived as more professional in a commercial context since she can speak English:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *If I speak a few words in English, maybe I give this customer, he would look at me in another way. Like, 'Oh! She knows what she's doing!' So, I think this is the perspective of people in our culture towards people who speak English.*

Perhaps, due to the social status English attributes to Saudi women, Faridah said that the self-confidence of Saudi women who speak English fluently is visible:

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *When you see Saudi women speak English fluently, you will see a big amount of confidence when she speaks ... there's a different energy about her.*

#### 6.2.1.6 English: as ‘a weapon’

The fifth metaphor is ‘a weapon’. The positive metaphors such as ‘key’ and ‘adapter’ described above are significant in the wider discussion of gender-related issues. However, Khalfa and Ibtisam went even further, disclosing that English can also be used as ‘a weapon’:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *I think women, nowadays, with their English knowledge, it's like having 'a weapon' to protect them from men. They can protect themselves.*

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *No one can pick up on her ... No one can bully her because she has this inner defence, almost ... Because she will understand everything because, right now, everything is in English.*

Khalfa disclosed a very personal story, which highlighted the influence of English language competence in English behind closed doors:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *You know some words are not available. Like, you look for them, they're not in Arabic, they're just in English. Let's say, 'pathetic' for example; we don't have it.*

Another interesting gender-related aspect explored in Khalfa's perspective of English was how the language is perceived by Saudi men:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *The new generation of Saudi men nowadays, they look at a knowledgeable woman in a different way. They're much more respected.*

#### 6.2.1.7 English: 'the adapter'

The sixth metaphor is 'the adapter'. Khalfa used the definite article, which means it is exclusive, making this a more powerful symbol:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *English in a way is... is 'the adapter'. It's connecting these two worlds.*

In their narratives, learners expressed feelings of pride, increased confidence and a feeling of professionalism in mastering English. Jamila, Aliyah and Sherine also shared a sense of accomplishment with their professional careers as translators:

**S(NP2) Jamila:** I am also so proud of myself that I am an interpreter and translator. I am not only helping myself to communicate with speakers of different languages, but I am also helping other Saudi women to do so by playing a role of a mediator.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** I now can express my own ideas and opinions in English and can communicate with English speakers without having any difficulties.

**S(NP8) Sherine:** Now, I feel that I have the capacity of speaking English fluently with anyone in everywhere, whether with American or Canadian people at university or at Hospitals. I feel happy and proud of myself and what I have done until now.

Learners' interviews in cohort 2a described feelings of fluency in mastering English to the B2 level. Ibtisam and Khalfa explained how they felt about themselves now as fluent English speakers:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *I feel more confident. For our academic studies, we have to give our presentations in English. I feel like more professional when I speak in English, actually.*

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *It's given me that confidence. And the fact that I speak more than one language is a beautiful thing. Yes, I feel proud of myself. Now I can communicate with anyone I want, like for example, you! If I met you maybe three, four years ago, I wouldn't be able to communicate with you like this, to connect with you, because I couldn't speak your language.*

#### 6.2.1.8 Saudi women: 'the cover of the book'

The last metaphor for the emerging theme of 'empowerment' is 'the cover of the book':

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *Saudi women should be bilingual in English. A woman, as the mother, is the one that carries her knowledge into the next generation. She's also like, the 'cover of the book' ... Women are the example of any culture ... being a woman that speaks English ... she's giving education, feeding them with knowledge... and raising her children in a more modern way.*

The metaphor intertwines knowledge and bilingualism in English with the traditional gender role of motherhood, which is insightful. The connection she makes between all three of these components is significant. In her perception the importance of English lies in raising children 'in a more modern way'. Ibtisam in this way perceives language and knowledge as an equal investment for the future generation.

Learners' narratives express diverse metaphors and feelings about how English gives women greater confidence and increases independence for women as well as the positive regard and respect for those women who master English. These were sub-themes that built up the global theme label: 'empowerment', a concept word that seemed to best encompass these perspectives.

### **6.2.2 Emerging theme: Linguistic imperialism**

This section describes the second part of the emerging theme, 'empowerment versus linguistic imperialism', that answers RQ5: how is English perceived and used in practical ways by Saudi women EFL learners? The learners also reflected on how their situation would be different if they had not acquired fluency in English. They generally explained that if 'you' (a Saudi citizen) cannot speak English as a second language, there are greater obstacles, both academically and professionally. This study evidenced the disadvantage of not speaking English in KSA. In the preceding section, powerful metaphors for English were provided, which support the label of 'empowerment'. Yet, these were contrasted with opposing metaphors which support the label of 'linguistic imperialism'. However, 'linguistic imperialism' is the term I chose to summarise diverse metaphors and examples. It reflected theory on linguistic issues related to English but was grounded in the learners' own words, referring to the consequence of not having English as a second language.

#### **6.2.2.1 L2 Learner Experience**

In the learner cohort 2b, the Saudi women EFL learners in their narratives evidenced that through their L2 experience, they never had a native English EFL teacher. Saudi EFL female learners such as Sabiha, Reem, Aliyah, Maysoon, Arwa and Dalyah had to adapt to the HE standards of EFL in Saudi HEIs to study English for their related EMI courses. They noted that this can prove challenging:

**S(NP3) Sabiha:** I had never been taught by western English teachers. This is because I studied in public schools, in which only Arab teachers teach.

**S(NP4) Reem:** I had zero of western English teachers. I was a student in a private school.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** I hadn't experienced learning with western English teachers at all until I was a student at a university in KSA.

**S(NP7) Maysoon:** I did not have any foreign English teachers. However, everyone that taught me was professional and had an excellent knowledge of the language.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** I had no western English teachers because in my city, Madinah, at that time, only international schools hire western English teachers and my school was not an international school.

**S(NP1) Dalyah:** I had no western English teachers. English teachers in our public schools were always Saudi.

Jamila and Arwa described the difficulty of adjusting to the HE standard as against their earlier learning experience with traditional Saudi language-teaching methods:

**S(NP2) Jamila:** I thought English was easy to learn because back in school, the English curriculum focussed on understanding English grammatical rules and applying them in sentences, in addition to memorising new vocabulary. Other English language skills were marginal (...) because in school, we did not learn the basic skills of learning a language properly. However, in college, we've studied independent intensive courses of each skill.

Jamila's narrative was insightful, as she argued that her schooling was more traditional and based on learning functional English grammar, separate language skills learning, rote learning and memorisation. English was described as less communicative at that stage. Jamila explained her difficulty when she was engaged in communicative language learning:

**S(NP2) Jamila:** Now, I think English is not very easy to learn if the learner wants to be an advanced English speaker because when I entered college, then started studying English, I faced difficulties in listening and speaking courses. I was not familiar with native speakers when I was listening to their audios during classes

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** I went to school in KSA, from 6 years old to 18 years old. In school, I studied English since I was 11 years old because it was the main subject to study in my school and because I had a passion for learning this language.

**S(NP1) Dalyah:** I have not learnt English through school/travelling – actually none of them!

Dalyah did not have any exposure to western women growing up and, at the time of the study, had never travelled outside Saudi. In describing herself, she mentions she is self-taught through using informal learning and linguistic technology.

**S(NP1) Dalyah:** There is no word that could explain my happiness to see our government try their best to bring us western teachers and pay them to make us learn by native speakers.

However, adjusting to learning English in a different pedagogic style proved difficult. The narrative of Dalyah was insightful, as she described the difficulty of adjusting to the academic rigour of learning English in HE according to international standards because informal learning made up the basis for her

language fluency and not academic learning. She also commented on the advantages of peer learning in an interactive teaching environment.

**S(NP1) Dalyah:** I thought that learning English in a university setting would be easy, but it's not because I learnt the slang from this language and the public things, but in university, it's all academic. I really liked learning English at university because I had the chance to learn academic words and had the chance to talk with my classmates who're in the same level of the language.

Arwa described her experience of learning English in a Saudi HEI in the Foundation Year programme.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** As an English language learner at university, I found learning at university to be a beneficial experience, yet exhausting because I studied English for 4 hours daily, and it was tiring sometimes, especially when I have tests and projects in other subjects.

Sabiha and Jamila observed the importance of language exposure outside the classroom through informal learning.

**S(NP3) Sabiha:** I thought that learning English in this university setting would be enough for mastering it. However, it takes off-campus, informal learning as well.

**S(NP2) Jamila:** I thought that learning English in this university setting would be as easy as learning English in school. However, it turned out that to be proficient in a foreign language, I need to practice it frequently and not only depend on college courses.

Sabiha commented on the teaching style of western women EFL teachers at the Saudi HEI:

**S(NP3) Sabiha:** I found learning with my western teacher to be less challenging than learning English with Arab teachers. I found learning with the university English material to be teacher-centred as learners need to learn what and by the means a teacher asks them to learn, giving no chance for learners to show their varied levels or use their creativity.

#### **6.2.2.2 English: as 'the gate'**

The first metaphor 'the gate' was found in interviews and in narratives.

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *English actually is 'the gate'. (...) If you're not good at English, you're actually not going to pass the entrance exam. In fact, you're not going to become a doctor or a dentist. So that's challenging.*

Ibtisam, in her interview, explains how critical English is for Saudi students who wish to become doctors or dentists, that despite working with Arab speakers and living in KSA, without sufficient English they are blocked from qualifying. Ibtisam provided a powerful metaphor to contrast her earlier metaphors for English. Noticeably, she uses the definite article, which means English is exclusive in being a gateway to opportunities, making this an even more powerful symbol. Likewise, in her narratives, Reem does not use the metaphor 'gate'; however, she explains:



**S(NP4) Reem:** *I feel like it's one of those languages that if you're not a native speaker of English like if you live in a country where it's not one of the main languages, you would, one way or another, be forced to learn it... Either at school or even after you graduate, you have to learn at least a bit of English if you want to just get anywhere in life.*

Khalfa, in her interview, gives a personal example from her Saudi HEI. Without the required entry-level of English, a student cannot become an interior designer; despite any special artistic talent or skill, she may have, like technical drawing or creativity. Primarily, she must be good at English to become qualified as an interior designer:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Actually, in my university, they look at your English marks before you go into certain majors. You can't enter unless you speak perfect English! You're not accepted in interior designing school. They actually transfer you to painting or graphic design.*

Ruqayyah, in her interview, showed discomfort due to this unfairness, as English is becoming a gateway to tertiary education as well as professional opportunities.

**S(IP4) Ruqayyah:** *I do wish that we were in a world where I didn't need to learn English, to be bilingual, just to have opportunities in life. I mean, English influences my opportunities. I got to level six in university, and because I did, I think it will help me a lot ... as opposed to someone who was in level one or level two. It's something that would help my career in the future.*

Ibtisam also showed certain awareness of how this unfairness affects people who do not speak English:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *I think, they're not looked down upon [people who don't speak English], but they're missing lots of opportunities*

Reem explains in her narrative that she feels a certain resentment towards the perception of non-English-speaking Saudi women. She recognises that there is an underlying necessity to obtain English; this has negatively impacted on the young Saudi workforce. In KSA, Arabic is no longer enough.

**S(NP4) Reem:** *It's not fair because KSA isn't an English-speaking country, it's an Arabic speaking country, so it shouldn't require you to know English, just to get a good job ... You should just know your mother language, and that's all that they should need.*

The Saudi women EFL learners from different faculties in Saudi HEIs in this study have experienced how English is dominant in Saudi HE and especially tertiary education policies. For example, Arwa, in her narrative, had not left KSA and explained how she had to study English irrespective of her cultural interest as motivation because English is a mandatory part of her education.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** *I have not been outside KSA. I started learning English when I was in middle school until college. Regardless of my love for English, I mainly studied it in school because it was one of the courses in the curriculum.*

English has an impact on employment, as the training of Saudi citizens and their future employability depends on it; showing further how English is 'the gate' after tertiary education, as Faridah's interview explains:

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *I think you would need to learn ... know English, if you're working here. You would know it just to know how to communicate with foreign workers – a lot of jobs require you at least to know English, and you must know how to use a computer. It's like one of those basic skills that are required in many, many career options.*

#### **6.2.2.3 English: as 'the language of scholars'**

The second metaphor was that English is especially important in academia. In their interviews, Ruqayyah and Ibtisam recognised that another significant sociocultural impact of English is that of its intellectual property.

**S(IP4) Ruqayyah:** *English has just spread around the world, and a lot of people have learnt it because, throughout the years, it's become the 'language of scholars' and a lot of important literature is in English. You use a lot of computer programmes... in English only.*

Ruqayyah perceives English as dominant in the Arab world, because of its status in research and for disseminating technical literature. Also, because of the number of academic resources which are only published in English. Ibtisam also recognised that academia in this research context relies heavily on the English-speaking world for English publications in diverse fields of research:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *Anything you want to learn, you have to go back to English books, or English reference because they're like probably more published. There are maybe more resources available ... the importance of English is that academically it's become very important.*

#### **6.2.2.4 Without English: 'Cut off or blind'**

The third metaphor is 'cut off or blind'. Ibtisam again provided a powerful metaphor to contrast her earlier metaphors for English. This metaphor provided a vivid contrast with that of English as an 'international key' and 'a passport'; instead, it evoked images associated with disability and discrimination.

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *I think people not learning English are 'cut off or blind' in some kind of way.*

'Blind' is a powerful way to describe those who cannot speak English, while she did not elaborate further. Without English, a person is unable to see what is around oneself or see one's culture from different cultural perspectives. You cannot interact outside a monocultural standpoint, and one cannot use English as 'an international key' to access and explore different cultural perspectives; in that sense, you are 'cut off' from the wider world.

#### **6.2.2.5 Without English: 'the bubble' and 'a block'**

The fourth metaphor is 'the bubble'. It provides insightful similarity to the metaphor 'blind and cut off' that Ibtisam used in the preceding section. Khalfa perceives Saudis who only speak Arabic as living in 'the bubble'; this strongly denotes an awareness both as 'an insider' and as 'an outsider' to her own culture and a certain judgement of those who cannot move beyond their monocultural standpoint.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *If I speak only Arabic, I'm not going to break 'the bubble' that we are in because I would only be able to socialise with the Arabic speakers ... I'm not going to understand other cultures or have an interest in other people and in their culture and in their lives.*

Faridah refers to 'a block' as a useful metaphor alongside 'the bubble', which leads to the theme of exclusion in later sections.

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *When a western person comes to KSA, they are not going to understand him if he doesn't speak English. They are not going to understand the Saudi culture. There will be a block between him and them. Because they can't socialise together, they can't connect with each other (...) Even if someone had an idea about the other person, maybe a wrong one ... it's not going to be corrected because they can't interact with each other through a common language*

Similarly, Khalfa claims that if Saudi citizens speak English, they can become more interculturally aware and more open-minded.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Saudi people are now more open and open-minded because they can understand other people, other cultures.*

#### **6.2.2.6 Without English: the judgement**

The concept of 'linguistic imperialism' as an emerging theme was built up from the metaphors and organising themes that arose. It was evident in how important English was for social standing, perceived as 'the gate'. At the same time, some participants also criticised the judgement of Saudis who are not bilingual in English and Arabic.

Khalifa explains that Saudis who only speak Arabic are perceived negatively by bilinguals in Arabic and English:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *So, people will definitely treat you differently now if you didn't speak English. If you don't speak English, people will say: Why don't you speak English? –You don't have an excuse!*

At the same time, Faridah resented the attitude of native speakers of English who adopt a condescending attitude towards Arabs who do not speak English correctly:

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *The westerners that come here, they shouldn't expect people to speak to them in English ... even though people already do that because English is spoken all over the world. Yes, there's a lot of judgement in that: 'How can you not know English? It's like everywhere in the world!'*

These examples and feelings of resentment towards the dominance of English and the increasing pressure on Saudi undergraduates to learn English support the notion that 'linguistic imperialism' is felt. The dominance of English in literature, academia and in the system of education can limit both opportunity and choice for those pursuing further education. There were also vivid metaphors given to describe discomfort and disadvantage for those who do not speak English, in striking contrast to the metaphors for those who do.

In conclusion, given the positive sentiments and the metaphors chosen to describe how English is perceived and used, the emerging theme of

‘empowerment’ was attributed as a finding. At the same time, with evidence of underlying unfairness, even resentment towards English as ‘the gate’ and the judgement towards those who do not speak English, the emerging theme of ‘linguistic imperialism’ was attributed as a finding for RQ5.

### **6.2.3 Emerging theme: Transformation**

This section describes the second part of the emerging theme, ‘transformation versus exclusion’, that answers RQ6: how is globalisation understood and experienced by Saudi women EFL learners in KSA? The emerging theme of ‘transformation’ refers to how English is used in daily life by Saudi women.

#### **6.2.3.1 Globalisation: ‘one small world’**

Global competence and glocal identity are aspects that emerged in the interviews and narratives, supporting the emerging theme of ‘transformation’. This section describes the sociocultural impact of globalisation in Saudi society, such as the intangible influence of cultural globalisation in forming a glocal identity in Saudi women EFL learners. In her narrative, Aliyah describes what globalisation is:

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** *Being ‘one small world’ with respect to all our differences.*

In their interviews, Khalfa and Ibtisam explain globalisation as:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *A lot of people speak English, and I can understand other people, other countries or other cultures. I can connect with them. Yes, I can speak to them. I can... I can understand them.*

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *You know, the world has become like ‘a small village’, and you can meet people from all over the world.*

Ibtisam refers to what is often called the ‘global village’, and her interview proved that she was fully aware and familiar with the theoretical concept as well as the practical impact of globalisation in KSA. Likewise, Aliyah and Khalfa show a full understanding of globalisation in their own words, and this was considered a well-recognised concept in cohort 2a +b.

#### **6.2.3.2 Globalisation: Impact of technology**

Ibtisam’s experience shows how technology has enabled several Saudi women to interact beyond their immediate family through social media. Globalisation within KSA has led to the exponential usage of technology, in particular, the spread of social media via mobile applications that many young Saudis use. Reem, in her narrative, explains:

**S(NP4) Reem:** *In the age of social media, globalisation is a must, and Saudi youth is taking the country there! For example, me: as a Muslim, Saudi woman and a translator.*

Ibtisam and Faridah stated that their English learning is intertwined with digital literacy and, hence, informal learning. These learners share a very different reality to the one officially presented to western teachers as they arrive in KSA (see Section 1.4.3). In contrast to how the Saudi learners are described in orientation sessions given to teachers, these learners were much more

cosmopolitan and digitally active on social media than teachers could presume from the handbooks, regulations and etiquette guidelines (see Section 1.1). Similarly, in their interviews, with cohort 2a, informal learning with different mediums was much more common than teachers are led to believe through orientation:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *Movies, music, TV, news ... through media, you listen to a lot of native speakers, and you learn a lot of new words.*

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *Like my friends, I think they learned through the media, just watching movies and listening to a lot of native speakers and reading a lot.*

In her narrative, Sherine uses English for playing Multi-Modal Online Games (MMOGs) and video games with her brother.

**S(NP8) Sherine:** *Whenever I would play on PlayStation, I couldn't get the 'missions' done, because I couldn't read English, so each time I faced an obstacle, I'd call out my older brother to read English for me.*

These learners show how Saudi women have full access to the same resources of multi-modal learning, as found in other countries, despite the limitations, restrictions and cultural sensitivity in the classroom.

#### **6.2.3.3 Globalisation: not 'a threat'**

These learners describe cultural globalisation as being perceived positively and not 'a threat' to their identity. Moreover, with English having become socially indispensable within Saudi society, so has digital literacy, which is necessary to connect with the rest of the world. The changes and 'transformation' that the youth of KSA are experiencing is now described. It is demonstrated, firstly, in how they perceive English as a way of connecting them to the rest of the world. Its global value was perceived by Khalfa as one of the main benefits of learning English. The status of English as LF worldwide is increasingly recognised in KSA:

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Now, I can understand anything that is written in English, let's say on social media. I don't have to translate it or ask someone else to tell me what's written because I can understand it (...) everything right now, ah, on the social media, your phone is in English. Everyone has a phone, smartphone; it's in English.*

English is not reserved for merely its functional use for furthering education and meeting academic requirements. Instead, for these learners, it is used for its cultural heritage and especially for social media:

**S(IP1) Ibtisam:** *I don't agree that English is just functional; it still has a culture. It transmits culture, but it doesn't influence us negatively.*

**S(IP4) Ruqayyah:** *It's not just a language; it's a whole culture. That is the result of globalisation, in my opinion.*

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *It transfers culture because if you speak another language, you will definitely be interested in the countries that speak this language.*

Rather than being concerned that cultural globalisation is a secular or western threat that may negatively influence KSA, these learners highlighted the

importance of English and cultural globalisation in inducing tolerance for cultural diversity.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *A lot of people can connect with me, that's really great because I've noticed now that a lot of the Saudis can understand other countries, other cultures. Like I said, Saudis are now open-minded. And now, even other cultures can understand KSA because we can speak their language; we can explain things to them.*

Sherine commented on political globalisation, describing how English fluency helps her interactions with people from different cultures, nationalities and religions:

**S(NP8) Sherine:** Globalisation is a process to interact with other people, companies and governments, to impose their ideas and policies around the world. Globalisation has changed people's mind, especially Muslims of youth and Saudi women who like this kind of process that fit with their perception and attitudes.

She firmly holds on to her religious paradigm, thereby proving to have a resilient 'glocal' identity.

### **6.2.4 Emerging theme: Exclusion**

This section considers the second part of the emerging theme that answers RQ6: How is globalisation understood and experienced by Saudi women EFL learners in KSA? However, it also overlaps with part of the emerging theme 'empowerment versus linguistic imperialism'. It expands the previous emerging theme into a more generalised understanding of the impacts of English and globalisation on Saudi society. Therefore, the global theme of 'transformation', being a positive experience, is counterposed by the global theme, 'exclusion', which relates to the impact English and globalisation has had on the lives of young Saudi women more generally compared to a generation ago. The term 'exclusion' refers to the way in which people who do not speak English experience the transformation brought on by cultural globalisation in KSA.

The interviews and narratives both explored how participants perceived English; in addition, the narratives expanded this exploration by presenting insight into how the participants' family and parents view English and their parents' perception of how English may impact KSA as a country. The previous section referred to the perceptions of individuals who do not speak English; this section explores the generational gap in language acquisition. It explores the parents' perceptions of bilingual Arabic and English users, i.e. their children, and how parents struggle to experience the social transitions currently underway in the Saudi society.

#### **6.2.4.1 English: as 'a luxury'**

In cohort 2b, out of the eight narratives, six participants stated that their parents did not speak English or knew only elementary English, whereas they were the first bilingual speakers in their families along with their siblings. Daliya's chosen metaphor in the quotation below is taken as an example of how English can

exclude others but, for most of the parents, English was actively encouraged, despite not speaking it themselves.

**S(NP1) Dalyah:** My mother thinks English is interesting because she used to be good at it at school. My father thinks of English (and any second language) as ‘a luxury’ because he thinks that a mother tongue is enough for native speakers.

Khalfa mentioned that without English fluency, Saudi parents of this generation are disconnected from their children who live in a different era. From the participant profiling phase, it was found that many of the participants’ parents were not taught an additional language at school and did not speak English.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Ten years ago, maybe no one would care if I spoke English or not. Kids now, in this generation, are studying English better than it used to be taught. But, let’s say that my kids speak English, and I can’t speak English with them, we are distant (non-verbal gesture: hands moving far apart).*

A requirement of English Language competence is, therefore, a recent phenomenon. While it can be transformative, it can be divisive and exclusionary, as Sabiha explains:

**S(NP3) Sabiha:** My parents don’t speak English. They did not complete their school education and never needed to use English in their purely Arabian lifestyles. My mother thinks English is a language only intelligent people speak because she cannot speak it.

Sabiha’s parents are representative of a previous generation who lived at a time when English was not considered relevant to the Arab lifestyle. The narratives for cohort 2b provided greater depth to understand the transformation and exclusion due to the use and perception of English from a generational perspective. Parents who do not speak English are impressed by their daughter’s capacity to speak a second language fluently:

**S(NP5) Arwa:** My parents don’t speak English. My mother thinks English is interesting because she always hears me saying that it is interesting. My father thinks English is interesting too. My siblings have been learning it since they were children.

Therefore, her parents are excluded from the communications between Arwa and her siblings, as it is a language they do not understand. Dalyah noted how her mother perceives L2 identity positively because of her additional language, while her father considers it as ‘a luxury’ – something attainable by the new generation that has had access to learning it unlike in his own time.

#### **6.2.4.2 English: the language of the future**

The parents of many participants perceive English is indispensable for their daughters’ future. Reem speaks of her parents’ opinions on English and discusses its perceived social status:

**S(NP4) Reem:** My mother thinks English is important because she’s a well-educated woman. My father thinks English is important because he sees that English is the language of the future.

**S(NP2) Jamila:** My father thinks English is important because he thinks we will need it everywhere. My mother thinks English is very useful because she believes that it can be used to communicate with people when travelling outside KSA. In school, I studied English because my father believes that English is so important to be learned. Now, after graduating from college, I totally agree with my father on the importance of learning English.

Maysoon presented how her parents, while not fluent in English themselves, encouraged her to learn it and are proud of her achievements:

**S(NP7) Maysoon:** My parents do speak English but just a little bit; however, they are always encouraging me and are always proud of me for doing what I do. Whenever my mother has a question about a word in English, she always comes to me to make sure everything is correct. I also love how my father is proud of me for learning this language and how he always tells his friends how good my English is. All my siblings do speak the language and understand it very well too. However, I love how they come to me when needing to check something.

The parents of Arwa, Dalyah, Jamila, Maysoon, Reem and Sherine actively encouraged learning English early on in the education of their daughters. Sherine described how her father encouraged her from a very young age to learn English:

**S(NP8) Sherine:** My father used to buy me a lot of language toys because they were the toys that caught my full attention; hence, I kept playing with a kids' language-teaching telephone. I started to memorise very simple words whilst I had no idea what they meant. I sang along until I memorised all the songs.

In the narratives, the language acquisition history of each participant demonstrated how Saudi parents have actively encouraged their daughters to obtain linguistic fluency from a young age.

In conclusion, the emerging theme of 'transformation versus exclusion', it was made clear that the majority of these learners had already superseded their parents in their bilingual abilities. The previous generation can see a generational gap growing, yet strive to make sure that their daughters will not be excluded from a future that increasingly depends on English and digital literacy.

### **6.2.5 Emerging theme: Likeness**

This section describes the first part of the emerging theme, 'likeness versus othering', that answers RQ7: What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English?

Overall, the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English showed that the learners in cohort 2b perceived their western women EFL teachers positively. A concept termed 'likeness' emerged from participants' first-hand experiences with westerners. As previously defined, 'Likeness' is 'a feeling of gender-based affinity towards women of a different ethnic group', and this term is similarly experienced by the learners in their perception of their western women EFL teachers.



### **6.2.5.1    *Likeness: in the classroom***

It was found that ‘likeness’ can be cultivated through social integration and intercultural exchanges in the classroom with teachers. The changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English from western women were varied. Participants in cohort 2b observed aspects that were interculturally interesting as well as positive. Reem perceived western women EFL teachers as culturally sensitive:

**S(NP4) Reem:** I think western women are very polite, know their jobs well, and know what to do and what not to do in the Saudi classroom, respecting every culture and religion. My family members think western teachers are very polite, nice people. They love their family and respect each other.

Maysoon noted in her narrative that students are cautious in following the cultural rules and regulations and the importance of being respectful:

**S(NP7) Maysoon:** I believe foreign teachers are just like any other teacher, to whom a student must respect and behave well in front of.

### **6.2.5.2    *Likeness: family perceptions***

When they commented on what their extended family thought of learning with western women teachers, there were mixed responses. Arwa noted her family’s concerns:

**S(NP5) Arwa:** Many family members thought western teachers are too open-minded and independent.

Instead, Aliyah said that her family felt more positive about it.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** Many family members thought western teachers are the best for teaching English because they are native speakers, and no one can teach their language better than them.

### **6.2.5.3    *Likeness: cultural integration***

Learners in cohort 2b described what they thought of their western teachers and how they perceived westerners, in terms of adapting to the Saudi lifestyle:

**S(NP5) Arwa:** I thought they were more open-minded than Middle Eastern women. I think she was like me... what all women want in life... things like gender equality and such. Other western teachers said they think KSA is not like what they expected in terms of people’s behaviour and lifestyle. I think the main challenge for western women living is adapting to life here, since there aren’t a lot of places that women can go to nor activities that women can do in KSA.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** As a western woman, my teacher was different to me in terms of cultural perspectives and beliefs, but she was similar to me in terms of respecting each other and the passion of what we like in the life. I think the main challenge for western women living in KSA is the difference between our culture and gender roles.

Arwa and Aliyah explained that western teachers did not exchange information about their cultural heritage, customs and practices. Aliyah noted:

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** I had a western teacher from South Africa. My western teacher didn't talk about her culture.

Arwa was inspired by her teacher for her respectful attitude towards KSA and using Arabic in the classroom:

**S(NP5) Arwa:** I had a western teacher from America. She surprised us by speaking Arabic in class. This situation taught me so much because Arabic is relatively difficult to learn ... with the Saudi learners in the class; she was respectful. She showed respect to the country, for example, by wearing abaya whenever she goes out.

### 6.2.6 Emerging theme: Othering

This section answers the second part of the emerging theme, 'likeness versus othering', that answers RQ7: What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English?

#### (i) Othering: mainstream media

As shown in previous sections, these learners are digitally very active in using diverse forms of technology and social media, such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Twitter and YouTube. However, they are increasingly aware of the political rhetoric in mainstream media and in social media, regarding Saudi women. The changes in their sociocultural perceptions and attitudes after achieving English language competence were especially interesting because they relate to awareness concerning how others perceive Saudi women. In cohort 2a, Khalfa claimed in her interview that social media in western cultures are intentionally creating negative images of Saudi lifestyles, particularly of Saudi women.

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Social media's perception of women in KSA, that they're just trying to show that Saudi women are just following Saudi men. They think Saudi men are controlling their women. That they're, you know, keeping their women indoors. Her own job is to clean the house and raise the kids!*

In her interview, Faridah suggested that in Arab cultures, mainstream media are creating negative images of the secular lifestyles, particularly of western women, which is equally destructive.

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *We Saudi have bad thoughts about western culture. You're not the only one who have bad thoughts. Some people think that anything western is really, really bad! They think that western women are 'bad' in that their morals are bad, the way that they act is bad ... And everything is free in the West; there's no right and wrong. We think that all of the western world is racist ... and against Islam. That's why we are in our 'own bubble'. We hear a story or two, and we get so scared. Like, for example, three learners killed in the USA in hate crimes.*

Likewise, in cohort 2b the narratives of Arwa, Jamila, Reem and Aliyah, showed how Saudi women perceive the depictions of them and their culture in the media.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** The world thinks KSA is a mystery; western media just says KSA is rich with oil. Western media says Saudi women are oppressed. Saudi people are close-minded because they reject many things and ideas that western people believe to be normal. I think western media is biased against KSA because they only display negative images of the society here.

**S(NP2) Jamila:** The world thinks that KSA is a terrorist country that helps terrorists spread conflicts and wars around the world, which is obviously incorrect. Those who said that are the ones who have never been to KSA or any other Muslim country. They listen to rumours and hoax news in western media. Western media says Saudi women are very oppressed, and they have to follow precisely what the government wants them to do, for example, the rules that they say in the country ‘women are not to drive’.

**S(NP4) Reem:** I never liked western media! They represent us in the worst picture!

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** In western media, they depict Saudi women as ‘without freedom’; they’re just looking for bad things to say about KSA and depict Muslims as ‘bad people’. Unfortunately, the world thinks a lot of bad things about KSA. Western media says Saudi women are weak, without freedom, and bonded by men because of the guardianship, which is completely wrong.

However, Faridah shared some of her views on more conservative mindsets in KSA and criticised the ill-treatment of women. She implied that some Saudi men still strictly enforce the Shari’ah law of guardianship on women, and she provided a personal example.

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *I’m not going to lie and try to tell you we Saudis are perfect! Some Saudi men do that ... my sister’s friend is married, and her husband doesn’t let her to go to the mall by herself, even if she wants to go with her mother or sister, because there has to be a male with them! That is how closed-minded he is! Because, well, I don’t know why he would do that! He said, ‘Oh, I’m protecting her. Maybe something bad will happen to her, and I’m protecting her.*

The emergence of such contentious issues in the interviews demonstrates how young Saudi women are exposed to cultural globalisation and how they are re-interpreting their own culture as well as the transformation taking place in their generation independently and with discernment. Exposure to outspoken feminist perspectives or criticism of the Saudi customs and norms internationally may influence them, but they retain a loyalty to their culture and preserve their national identity as Saudi women.

## **(ii) Othering: in the classroom**

In cohort 2a, during the interviews, Faridah and Khalfa revealed how western women EFL teachers see their Saudi EFL learners through a ‘lens of othering’. They related how western EFL woman teachers joked about their stereotypes that they held with regard to KSA and Saudi women. These excerpts refer to how teachers used ‘culturally-laden jokes’ in the classroom or in conversations about their pre-service mindset:

**S(IP3) Faridah:** *One of the western teachers thought that Saudi women are 'not allowed to finish school' and that 'we don't have the interest in finishing school; we don't want to finish school; we only think about getting married and having kids'. No! We do have other thoughts, and we do want to finish school, have a career, open our own business, and all that stuff...*

**S(IP2) Khalfa:** *Western teachers think that women in KSA don't have our own voices; we only do what men tell us to do. And it's definitely wrong. For example, the hijab. They think that when we wear hijab when we cover our hair, it's because men tell us to do that. Even if there are some women who listen to men and do what they are told to do... No, we do it because the Holy Qur'an and Allah tell us to, but it's a personal choice, and it has benefits. Even if foreign people can't understand or relate to it ... We do understand it, and we do it because we understand it. We have minds, and we have brains, we know what we have, we know what's right, what's wrong.*

In cohort 2b, despite strict bans on discussing sociocultural issues in the orientation document (see Figure 4), Reem surprisingly explained in her narrative that in teacher-learner discussions, topics were discussed despite the HEI regulations.

**S(NP4) Reem:** The aspect of lifestyle that my teacher found different or difficult was having a 'BF' [boyfriend]. I like some of the discussions because other things are not related or not familiar to our culture and religion; for instance, in western countries, it is okay for a girl to have a boyfriend, while here in our country, we are not allowed because of our religion and culture. This situation taught me so much because it makes me accept other cultures.

Similarly, Aliyah explained that in her teacher-learner discussions, some taboo topics were mentioned.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** I remember once in class, my teacher told us a story about the accident she had and how she controlled the situation. I remember this story because we were talking about women driving.

Aliyah joked that her EFL teacher had strange stereotypes about Saudi learners:

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** My teacher thought KSA is life in deserts and used camels to move from place and place ... My teacher thought living in KSA was so hard, and she was afraid to come. She was surprised after she came, with buildings, transformations and our university.

Reem also explained that her EFL teacher had funny stereotypes regarding Saudi learners:

**S(NP4) Reem:** My teacher thought that we don't listen to music and don't know what Hollywood is ... Other western teachers said they think KSA is a weird place where we don't listen to music and can't visit our friends! I think the main challenge for western women living in KSA is that they feel like everything they do is wrong.

Sherine noted that her western teacher had changed her pre-service perspectives:

**S(NP8) Sherine:** My teacher thought KSA was a country of the source of terrorism, and women are not allowed to do what they want ... just cook for her

husband and children. My teacher thought living in KSA will be a dangerous place and very challenging. But from what I could tell, my teacher enjoyed her experience in KSA, and she tells us that as she learnt many Saudi cultures, words, like 'Kabsah' and 'Jaresh' [names of Saudi dishes]

### 6.2.7 Acculturation: recommendations

In advising western teachers, the learner cohorts 2a+b recommended how teachers should seek cultural immersion to change 'othering' mindsets which have a tendency to 'other' different lifestyles.

**S(NP4) Reem:** Don't believe the media; ask other people who have been to KSA.

**S(NP5) Arwa:** Do not be afraid to come to KSA; most people here are respectful and nice once you get to know them.

**S(NP6) Aliyah:** You will have an amazing experience not because it is my country, but because of facing and learning more about Saudi culture.

**S(NP8) Sherine:** Teaching in a country other than your country is considered as a unique experience. We need to take other cultures into consideration and find good opportunities to get to know each other's culture better.

Khalfa reiterates what the findings for cohort one suggests – a feeling of 'likeness' should be cultivated between western and Arab women rather than focussing on the differences and othering.

**S (IP2) Khalfa:** *There are educated Saudi women, who run high positions, run their own company besides their husband or father or without anyone. The fact is Saudi women are as normal as other women around the world; some are living high-life, some are working hard on themselves, some live normal happy life with its happiness and struggles and others are struggling a lot! I think western media is focussing so much on the bad side without equally looking into both sides – the good and the bad. They aren't considering that each country has its own problems.*

## 6.3 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter discussed the emerging themes found through the thematic analysis process in the preceding chapter in order to answer the research questions. I split this chapter into three sections describing the emerging themes for cohort 1, 2a and 2b. The emerging themes for cohort 1 were as follows: 'isolation versus integration'; 'likeness versus othering'. For cohort 2a+b, the analysis found the merging themes of 'empowerment versus linguistic imperialism', 'transformation versus exclusion' and 'likeness versus othering'. I include one complete interview transcript for cohort 2b and one complete narrative from cohort 2a for further reference (Appendix 17; Appendix 18). This chapter included extensive direct quotes with the participants' own words to increase 'life-likeness' (Barkhuizen et al., 2013) and to flesh out the underlying premises for the emerging themes. I used metaphors in the subheadings, such

English as a 'gate' or as a 'weapon' to summarise the global themes and to justify the findings for each research question. I use these metaphors in the final chapter to easily link the findings to theory.

## Chapter 7 Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the findings in the same order as the research questions posed for cohort 1 (RQ1–4) and cohort 2a+b (RQ5–7). I endeavour to position these findings in relevant theoretical fields and similar intercultural studies in teaching EFL (see Chapter 2). Following this, these findings are considered in terms of policy and practice in this EFL context. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study and presents possible areas of further research. Finally, I make a claim for the study's contribution to the existing literature.

### 7.1 Discussion of findings: Western women EFL teachers

#### 7.1.1 Findings for RQ1

##### **RQ1 How do western women EFL teachers in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs adapt to KSA?**

In contextualising the study, I described in Chapter 1 the unique cultural challenges for western women EFL teachers working in Saudi HEIs in KSA. In these discussions, I put forward the claim that western women may find the 'teaching experience' challenging, and struggle to adapt to living and working in KSA, as explained earlier, because of the strictly conservative Muslim environment of KSA at the time of the study. This assumption was based on the recognition of the vast difference between the 'host culture' in KSA and the 'home culture' of these women teachers (see Section 2.5). The initial argument was based on the premise that while western women were motivated by diverse pre-service reasons (see Section 2.5.1), they would inevitably face cultural challenges in living as western women in KSA (see Section 2.5.2). In addition, because of the influence of pervasive negative stereotypes of the 'host culture' in KSA in mainstream media, the intercultural differences are negatively perceived (see Section 2.2.4). Before conducting the study, therefore, I assumed it would take considerable 'intercultural competence' (Byram, 2000) for western women to adapt to the teaching environment in Saudi HE. The teaching challenges consist in having to mediate the high degree of cultural sensitivity in the Saudi classroom, having to deal with unfamiliarity of the Saudi HEI managerial culture and modifying their western paradigm to best adapt to teaching Saudi women in Saudi HEIs. At the same time, Shari'ah laws and gender-based restrictions and other sociocultural challenges are encountered in living and working in KSA as western women. With this background taken into consideration, I introduced literature on 'culture shock' (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005) about adapting to challenging teaching settings. Despite being mature, experienced teachers, the degree to which Wahhabism and religious restrictions influence the daily life of women, and the teaching culture made them feel more like 'novice teachers' in this particular teaching setting (Kamasawa, 2013).

The findings for RQ1, in reference to western women EFL teachers in gender-segregated Saudi HEIs, and how they adapt to KSA, were derived from the emerging themes of 'isolation versus integration' and in part from 'likeness versus

othering'. The acculturation process is used in this discussion to anchor the findings of 'isolation' and 'integration' to measure the extent of cultural 'adaptation' in cohort 1. The term 'acculturation' was introduced earlier (see Section 1.4.6) as the stage-based identity of teachers progressing in the acculturation process (Jandt, 2004, p. 26–32 as cited in Wright, 2005). The acculturation process is used in this discussion to anchor the findings of 'isolation' and 'integration' to measure the extent of cultural 'adaptation' in cohort 1. I now discuss the finding of 'isolation versus integration' within my study.

The present study shows that some teachers struggled to acculturate, i.e. adapt to living and working in KSA while others adapted well. Findings derived from cohort 1 narratives showed that, when teachers relocated to KSA, they described feelings of fear, trepidation and excitement that could be attributed to 'a teacher-tourist' stage 1 of acculturation (Jandt, 2004; Wright, 2005). In the pre-service segments of their narratives, they described the 'exoticism of the teaching context'. Their narratives also described feelings of anxiety, anger, and withdrawal from the host culture while adapting to the context. As described earlier (see Section 1.4.6), these are typical reactions of the 'exilic identity' stage (Wright, 2005). All the teachers struggled with such feelings, describing isolation in different areas of their working lives (see Section 6.1.1). Some teachers overcame these feelings and adapted better to living and working in gender-segregated HEIs. However, two remained in the stage of the 'exilic identity', and this led to resignation and turnover. These two teachers blamed the stagnation in their acculturation process on external obstacles, such as gender-related restrictions, and in turn adapted less to KSA, succumbing to feelings of 'being trapped' by the many restrictions placed on them or alienated.

In contrast, the other teachers overcame these challenges and found ways to integrate into the local culture. These teachers adapted better and acquired a greater sense of belonging by sublimating negative external issues (i.e. unmanageable workload, management problem and lifestyle restrictions) into social activities that help integrate them into the Saudi society. It was deduced that the teachers who adapted less were not able to integrate into their local surroundings. This will be discussed further in implications for policy and practice (see Section 7.3.1). Interestingly, at the exilic stage, those two teachers felt 'they have no choice but to leave' (Wright, 2005 p. 27). Although the other teachers did eventually resign after staying much longer, the HEI would have continued their employment, demonstrating that they were perceived to 'fit in' with the cultural context. This sheds light on the teacher turnover, which will be discussed in reference to RQ3 in Section 7.1.3.

How well teachers adapt is also measured by 'integration' in the acculturation process. In the context explored here, 'integration' is equivalent to the latter stages in the acculturation process (Wright, 2005), i.e stage 3, 'the teacher-



stranger', stage 4, 'the teacher-settler', and stage 5, where the teacher achieves biculturalism (see Section 1.4.6). These are the stages where teachers learn to adapt (Jandt, 2004). Teachers who aspired to be part of local Saudi community, described still feeling only 'an 'applicant' to the host culture' (Schutz, 1964 as cited in Wright 2005, p. 29). Some teachers adapted better, and moved beyond the 'teacher-stranger', of stage 3, having an 'increased ability to function in a new culture' (Jandt, 2004, pp. 320–321 as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30).

How well teachers adapt to KSA was mostly measured by the emerging theme of 'isolation versus integration', but also in part from 'likeness versus othering'. As they adapted to living and working in KSA, a new understanding of the host culture became evident in the narratives as they learnt the language or had authentic Saudi experiences. They began to see '... good and bad elements in both the home and new cultures' (Jandt, 2004, p. 320 as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30). Measuring their level of adaptation through the identity-based stages also meant measuring to what extent their mindset changed, from a stage 1, 'teacher-tourist' mindset to a stage 4, 'teacher-settler' mindset. This aspect was measured by their recognition of changes in their mindset, from how they viewed their previously held stereotypes, attitudes and beliefs of the 'host culture'. It also measures acceptance of cultural diversity, showing how much teachers had adapted through their experience of acculturation. Even teachers who remained at stage 2, the 'exilic' identity changed some of their sociocultural perceptions and attitudes towards the host culture. Other teachers became a 'teacher – settler', staying much longer in KSA, and adapted so much that they felt at home. Some of these teachers appear to have achieved 'biculturalism', (i.e. becoming able to cope comfortably in both the home and new cultures') (Jandt, 2004, p. 321 as cited in Wright, 2005, p. 30).

Findings for RQ1, therefore, show how differently the process of acculturation is experienced and contributes to understanding how different teachers adapt or acculturate to challenging teaching settings. These findings cannot take into account many other variables that influence the extent to which a teacher can acculturate, such as the psychosocial history, unique personality traits, or interpersonal relation analysis of each teacher. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalised as each acculturation journey is unique. The findings do, however, connect the acculturation process of teachers to the importance of cultural interaction in the teacher-learner interactions. Fundamentally, the findings suggest that cultural interaction with L2 learners and wider teaching environment is important for successful acculturation of teachers in challenging settings. The findings of 'integration' suggest that teachers who built in-roads into the community by creating opportunities to interact beyond their workplace culturally and teaching environment adapt better to the host culture. Cultural interaction was accentuated in this particular research setting, because of the extent of cultural sensitivity in the Saudi EFL classroom. Stagnation seemed to occur when 'the dialogic meaning-making processes of defining culture' (Kramsch, 2014b; Street, 1993, p. 25) is curtailed in the Saudi EFL classroom or Saudi HEI, and it is

interpreted by teachers that their own 'cultural identity' is being largely overlooked, reduced or ignored (Baumann, 1998; Raddawi, 2015; El-Sakran, 2017).

Findings for RQ1 also suggest that the difficulty of adapting for western teachers in Saudi HEIs may not be caused simply by the 'large culture' (Holliday, 1999) differences as initially predicted. The acculturation process instead was strained by differences in what Holliday(1999) referred to as 'middle culture' of the teaching environment. This aspect will be explored further in the following section.

### **7.1.2 Findings for RQ2**

#### **RQ2 How do western women EFL teachers describe their experiences of working in a Saudi HEI?**

While RQ1 focussed on individual acculturation processes, RQ2 focusses on how western women EFL teachers describe their experiences of working in a Saudi HEI, mostly by descriptions of these external factors based on their interpretation of events. This section links their experiential descriptions to key theoretical concepts introduced earlier: cultural 'blocks' and 'threads' (Holliday, 1999, 2016); 'middle culture' (Holliday, 2016); 'cultural competence' (Byram, 2000) and 'institutionalised culture' (Sarangi, 1994).

These eight teachers provide insight into the working environment of gender-segregated HEIs as perceived by western women who chose to work in KSA for the period specified in the study. As stated in Chapter 2, the 'middle culture' (Holliday, 1999, 2009, 2010) between expatriates and Saudis is 'distinctly formed across national cultural boundaries in small culture contexts for a long or short duration, which provides the ground on which dealing between the two parties takes place' (Holliday and Hoose, 1996, cited in Holliday, 1999, p. 239). Overall, at the time of the study, 'middle culture' in Saudi HEIs was described by these teachers as strained by intercultural misunderstandings, specifically those of status and power, leading to 'institutional isolation'. In previous studies on foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs, it was suggested that there is a problem of misunderstandings in a 'high-context culture' such as KSA (see Section 2.2.5). Specifically, foreign faculty members within the Saudi HEI find 'the ladder of command in EFL management' in Saudi HEIs challenging (Elyas and Picard, 2010, p. 140). Similar to existing studies, the teachers' descriptions in this study revealed there are negative consequences for sociocultural misunderstandings in the classroom and the EFL workplace, and this can create a fear-based 'organisational culture' (see Section 1.4.6) in EFL practice. In addition to similar challenges, these teachers' demotivation was partly caused by their unsuccessful negotiations with management because of the power and status dynamics within the organisational culture. The teachers' choice of words describing EFL management in Saudi HEIs, such as 'militarist' and 'dictatorial', shows how

strongly some teachers felt towards the organisational culture specific to their workplace (see *work environment*, Section 6.1.1). Such narrative descriptions link to institutionalised culture (Sarangi, 1994) in EFL, and how censorship operates in the classroom (Almutairi, 2007; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Alamri, 2011; Badry and Willoughby, 2015; Alexander et al., 2016).

Limited research to date has explored how western EFL teachers describe the perceived effects of cultural sensitivity on the EFL workplace and EFL teaching. As mentioned in Chapter 2, local research in KSA is grappling with 'the place of culture' in EFL practice and specifically how to deal with 'culture' in the classroom (Brooks, 1968; Buttjes, 1990; Coombe, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Al-Issa, 2009; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Al-Issa and Dahan, 2011; Bailey and Damerow, 2014; Elyas and Badawood, 2016). Generally, working in Saudi HEIs was perceived to be somewhat strained by cultural sensitivity restrictions because of the hidden dynamics of status and power it created. In the present study, findings suggest that teachers working in Saudi HEIs described cultural sensitivity restrictions as 'a threat' because of how it could affect their job security, which links to other regional studies (Gobert, 2015; El-Sakran, 2017). Studies on this research context have until now mostly focussed on cultural sensitivity in EFL practice from the perspective of male and female Saudi or Arab EFL teachers (Alam, Hussein and Khan, 1988; Alamri, 2011; Mahboob and Elyas, 2014; Aljohani, 2016). Limited research to date has explored cultural sensitivity in the Saudi classroom from a western EFL teachers' perspective. This study found that if the organisational culture in EFL practice imposes cultural restrictions too forcefully, it can negatively affect teacher-learner interactions and the L2 learners' experience. Therefore, these teacher-learner dynamics were perceived to be strained by 'a sociocultural process' (Baker, 2011) which assumes social and political aspects of 'a large culture'. All HEI faculty members are expected to adhere to the orientation document (see Figure 4). Still, in practice, this can 'displace horizons' in an uncomfortable process of interacting with learners in culturally appropriate ways (Kramsch, 2014b). Overall, teachers were put in challenging circumstances, which was described fully in Chapter 6. Their experience made some of the teachers feel disempowered by the cultural sensitivity policies or make them want to rebel against them, as it became increasingly challenging to mediate what 'culture' officially is (as documented by Saudi HEI) and with how their Saudi learners *do* culture in their daily lives (Street, 1993). This conflict could disrupt the teacher's value systems, causing 'refraction' in their definition of culture (Volosinov and Bakhtin, 1973). In the present study, teachers described feeling increasingly uneasy about their teacher status and the teacher-learner interactions, or, at times, even threatened by sociocultural misunderstandings which could be reported to the EFL management in Saudi HEIs.

Consequently, the western women EFL teachers feared that their learners could be 'possible informants', and this fear created a hidden dynamic of power and suspicion in the EFL classroom. The fear of informants in challenging teaching settings link to an earlier study:

'Where unsubstantiated accusations by students may force the teacher out of a job thus building mistrust and leading to exilic identity' (Wright, 2005, p. 27).

Some teachers described an 'inverted power dynamic' in the EFL classroom in female gender-segregated Saudi HEIs, i.e. where learners are more powerful than the teacher. If the hidden dynamics of power characterise the nature of the teacher-learner relationship on 'institutionalised culture' (Sarangi, 1994), the teaching environment can be perceived as hostile.

Contrary to this, the present study suggests that more 'cultural competence' (Byram, 2000) is needed to enable western teachers unfamiliar with high context cultural settings in Saudi HEIs to navigate intercultural differences better. All eight participants of this study described some experiential situations where the 'middle culture' interactions were unsuccessful. For example, there were misunderstandings between western teachers and the Saudi HEI management and with the administration in HR departments. These problems were described by western teachers only. Thus, the extent of the problem might be limited by one-sided interpretation, i.e. the teacher's subjectivity of their situation. The teachers' descriptions also suggest that intercultural information provided in orientation sessions can reinforce 'large culture' stereotypes. It was also noted by some teachers, that there was a lack of detailed logistical information in orientation sessions for western teachers on arrival, which they claimed negatively impacted on their process of acculturation.

Nonetheless, these findings do suggest that there are intercultural challenges that need addressing to improve EFL practice, especially because, as described from the teachers' perspective, various intercultural issues could not be addressed directly and were left unresolved. For the teachers concerned, this increased their feelings of frustration and 'institutional isolation'. These findings relate to implications to practice (see Section 7.3.1).

### **7.1.3 Findings for RQ3**

#### **RQ3 Why is there a high turnover of western women EFL teachers in Saudi gender-segregated HEIs?**

Within this small qualitative study, certain assumptions can be made regarding the high turnover of male and female expatriates working in Saudi HEIs. For example, living in a conservative society governed by Wahhabism is too challenging for single, non-Muslim westerners. According to some scholars, the 'exilic identity' is the stage when resignations are most likely based on the emotional reaction to such challenging work environments (Wright, 2005; Jandt, 2004). However, this study found the turnover rate was not because teachers struggled in 'exilic' stage; instead, findings showed that most teachers acculturated beyond this stage as mentioned earlier. Another assumption for high teacher turnover is that EFL teaching contracts in Saudi HEIs are for one academic year only (renewable), which may create a short-term mindset as a

'migratory teacher'. However, as noted with the RQ1 findings, some teachers acculturated successfully becoming 'teacher – settlers', and yet, they too resigned. Perhaps, the turnover rate is high because teaching is a lucrative profession in the Gulf, EFL teachers change EFL jobs frequently, based on regional job opportunities. Moreover, this study presents additional reasons for why the turnover rate is high, and it shows other external variables influence teacher motivation.

The first finding for RQ3 presents further insights based on teacher demotivation theory (see Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). It was revealed in Chapter 6 that both *extrinsic* and *intrinsic* teacher motivations are important for living and working in KSA. Teaching English is a lucrative profession in the Gulf; however, these teachers evidenced the importance of *intrinsic* teacher motivations, not merely material incentives. The 'Ideal Teacher Self' was mostly rooted in *altruistic* and *intrinsic* goals, so when their 'ideal self' conflicted with the actual reality of the 'teaching experience', teacher demotivation increased. Some teachers in my study felt demotivated because of their pre-service motivation to 'save' Saudi women proved unrealistic. (In RQ4, I discuss the changes in their sociocultural perceptions in greater detail). This dissonance between what teachers hope to achieve and how they experience teaching relates to teacher retention.

Similarly, Wright's (2005) study also found teachers often implicitly hope to 'save' their learners and 'are scolded for their 'missionary zeal', which 'blinds them culturally to their teaching reality' (Wright, 2005 p. 33). In the present study, when teachers were obstructed by cultural sensitivity restrictions and unable to 'help Saudi women', their *altruistic* motivations, i.e. 'connecting with others' and 'making a difference' (Kumazawa, 2013) were curtailed. This issue causes 'disintegration' and 'difference' in teacher's self-concepts due to challenging teaching settings (Wright, 2005). This dissonance in teacher's self-concepts could predispose teachers to teacher demotivation.

The second finding, building on teacher's self-concepts, was that teachers found their role unfulfilling and could not identify with being teachers because of other external variables. Without *altruistic* motivation, teachers described feeling 'stuck' in a meaningless occupation. In my study, the teachers who felt restricted to merely transmitting linguistic knowledge, with limited cultural interaction with their learners, felt a sense of purposelessness that pervaded their daily lives as educators. If their job became devoid of meaningful teacher-learner relationships, their vocation became increasingly cold and impersonal.

In addition to this, excessive administrative duties were perceived as redundant or meaningless tasks. These teachers felt, at times, estranged from their vocation as teachers and, as one teacher described, EFL teachers became 'factory workers' in their institutions (see Section 6.1.1). This links to similar findings that show that 'where any 'self-concept conflicts' emerged - dilemma from an extensive range of duties, energy consumed in trivial things unrelated to teaching- in extreme cases, it caused an identity crisis' (Kumazawa, 2013, p. 46). This study shows how teachers can feel increasingly isolated in their private lives,

their classroom and their institution, which was summarised in this study as 'total isolation'. 'Total isolation' is reflected in Kumazawa's (2013) concepts of 'identity crisis', 'self-survival' and identity 'gaps', which are useful references in this study (see Section 3.1.4). These concepts have been addressed by other scholars in terms such as 'separation-from-self'; 'a feeling of separation from one's self, core, and identity' (Rokach, 1988, cited in Bekhet, et al., 2008, p. 211), which 'leads to a sense of feeling scattered, not able to focus, not engaging in the external world because of alienation or isolation' (O'Brien, n.d). Teachers resigned because of feelings attributed to total isolation due to various external variables.

The third finding was the external variable of power and status in the middle culture, amongst the various causes of total isolation; this was the most noteworthy. As noted with the RQ2 findings, teachers' descriptions of working in Saudi HEIs showed how dynamics of power in their classrooms or the 'middle culture' could negatively affect their wellbeing and even job security. In my study, some teachers described finding ways of 'rebellling against the system' by counselling their students in secret (see Section 6.1.1). This occurred despite the risk of being reprimanded or 'blacklisted', or their contracts being terminated/not renewed. Similarly, Wright (2005) also found that teachers may 'adopt identities as 'reformers' and 'rebels', hoping to change the system from the inside', who are eventually expected to 'tire of their agenda and leave' (p. 34).

Examining this from a slightly different angle, these teachers could have found it difficult to stay motivated in their institutions because of the organisational culture and went into 'a teaching mode of 'self-survival'' (Kumazawa, 2013). The external variable of power and status in the middle culture led to intercultural misunderstandings, complaints about the managerial style, which ultimately led to resignations (see Table 16, in Section 6.1.1). As this study takes qualitative evidence from eight western teachers, it cannot be generalised but can suggest that there may be an under-researched power dynamics in EFL teaching practice. In conclusion, the extent of high turnover is still largely unexplored; nonetheless, these findings have implications for policy and practice (see Section 7.3.1).

#### ***7.1.4 Findings for RQ4***

##### **RQ4 What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of western women teachers after teaching English?**

This study focussed on exploring the impact of English and globalisation on both western and Saudi women in HE. In particular, it focussed on the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of the western women after teaching English in Saudi HEIs. The teachers' narratives revealed conflictual feelings over their relocation to KSA. Their sociocultural journey of acculturation was framed by the global theme, 'othering versus likeness', with a dichotomous contrast to compare the pre-service perceptions to the post-service perceptions of teachers.

The findings for RQ4 relate to this discussion on sociocultural perceptions and attitudes from Chapter 6, which found that during their acculturation process, through integration and cultural immersion, sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of teachers can change.

This study found that eight teachers from diverse nationalities (i.e. Canadians, Americans, British, etc.) had similar pre-service notions about Saudi people and the Saudi culture, demonstrating high levels of 'othering' in the narratives. It is rather surprising because cohort 1 consists of cosmopolitan, experienced, well-travelled teachers and yet their pre-service attitudes ranged from unconscious prejudice and ethnocentrism to blatant racism (see Section 6.1.3). This raises questions as to why KSA was negatively perceived by cohort 1, by friends, relations. An assumption is that it is because of western mainstream media portrayals of women in KSA. This finding connects to previous work on racial discourse in mainstream media (van Dijk, 1987; Schneider, 1988; Charise, 2007; Nurullah, 2010). One of the impacts of globalisation is the extent to which mainstream media depict Saudi culture as the 'other' culture, which is perforating misconceptions and prejudice about Saudi men and women into EFL practice. This study substantiates similar claims on othering in previous studies in the Gulf Arab context (Abu-Lughod, 2001; Mishra, 2007; Le Renard, 2008). Specifically, the present study shows how othering processes in the classroom are manifested in prejudicial comments, sometimes even in 'culturally-laden jokes' demonstrating hidden assumptions teachers may have about Saudi culture or the Saudi women they teach. These findings can also be related to discussions on ethnocentrism in multicultural education studies and ethnocentric epistemologies concerning the sociocultural aspect of teaching English in the context of globalisation (Richardson and Villenas, 2000; Larson and Ovando, 2001; Kubota, 2002a, 2002b; Mackie, 2003). In rare moments of dialogic teacher-learner interactions, as discussed in Chapter 6, the cultural misunderstandings were indicators or rather mirrors of the larger picture of 'othering' between the East and West. This problem is currently largely ignored in the Saudi EFL classroom, and therefore, it is all the more important that such issues be acknowledged in EFL practice literature. Kubota (2002a), as discussed previously, emphasised 'raising such issues is the inescapable responsibility of those working toward empowering EFL students and transforming society' (Kubota, 2002a, p. 89).

The second finding for RQ4 involves the extent of intercultural immersion. Western women teachers seemed to be negatively influenced by western media as they all held similar misperceptions along with their friends and family. However, their sociocultural perspective of the 'other' culture did change substantially through the 'process of acculturation' while living in KSA. The teachers' narratives described their pre-service perceptions and, in their post-service section of the narratives, they were able to see "good and bad elements" in both cultures (Jandt, 2004, p. 320). Also, they seemed more open-minded towards the host culture than they had been before living and working in Saudi HEIs. Therefore, a significant finding showed that during the acculturation

process in challenging settings, cultural immersion can substantially remodel sociocultural prejudices towards the host culture.

This study suggests the possibility that remodelling sociocultural prejudices can happen if the teachers integrate into the host culture. Perhaps due to feeling an intrinsic motivation through ‘cultural interest’ (Kumazawa, 2013), they seek to recognise a ‘likeness’ with the Saudi women they met and taught. As explained earlier (see Section 6.1.1), I defined ‘likeness’ as a feeling of gender-based affinity towards women of a different ethnic group. ‘Likeness’ encompassed the feelings of commonality, solidarity and equality that emerged from their experiences. After they befriended Saudi women, they perceived Saudi and western women as equals, rather than reinforcing the implicit ethnocentric viewpoint that portrays Saudi women as ‘victims’. This study connects to previous research on teachers’ mindsets and values in teaching, such as ‘open-mindedness’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘whole-heartedness’ (Dewey, 1966, cited in Johnson and Golombek, 2002, p. 4). Appreciation of shared values as women and a deeper acceptance of diversity were evident after their cultural immersion. They did not apply a western feminist model so readily to the host culture as they initially had done; instead, they showed a greater awareness of prevalent stereotypes and judgemental attitudes towards Saudi women. These teachers even advised newly recruited western teachers to be more cautious about applying western feminist opinions. This aspect connects to Neilsen’s (2011) study, who also used narrative inquiry to explore the ‘teacher’s mindset’ of eight teachers in Australia. In his work, Neilsen’s (2011, p.4) main finding was that unfamiliar ‘cultural and linguistic contexts may disrupt teachers’ sense of both professional and personal identity’. He refers to ‘moments of disruption’:

‘Moments when teachers realise that their interactions with another culture have caused professional and/or personal change within themselves’ (Neilsen, 2011, p. 4).

There are similar findings in a study on pre-service and post-service attitudes of teachers by Ference and Bell (2004). They also revealed that through cultural immersion of teachers in the US, ‘cultural competence’ increased and intolerance decreased (Byram, 2000). Similarly, the present study provides qualitative evidence that shows how teachers can engage in meaningful intercultural exchanges that challenge prior misconceptions of the host culture. These moments of disruption happen when their first-hand experience changes their sociocultural mindset. This finding relates to the implications for teaching practice (see Section 7.4.1). Achieving high levels of acculturation between western and Saudi cultures helps teachers become ‘a mediator’ (Jandt, 2004; Wright 2005) especially in this context, and fulfil a specific role as EFL teachers (Kramsch, 2014).

In conclusion, this study highlights the complexity of intercultural experiences of western women in HE. It describes the diverse sociocultural dynamics underlying the acculturation process for western teachers, specifically in the Saudi HEIs. However, it is not generalisable to the wider EFL context. To date, these implicit sociocultural dynamics are largely under-researched in this setting, as current



research tends to focus on other legitimate concerns. Therefore, my study provides only a starting point to investigate such areas in teaching practice for women in HE in the Gulf Arab context. These findings relate to implications for practice (see Section 7.3.1).

## **7.2 Discussion of findings: Saudi women EFL learners**

### ***7.2.1 Findings for RQ5***

#### **RQ5 How is English perceived and used in practical ways by Saudi women EFL learners?**

The RQ5 findings add to ongoing discussions about English being perceived as ‘a threat’ in KSA (Farzaneh and Moghadam, 2003; Baki, 2004; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Mirhosseini, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Barnawi, 2015a; Banawi and AlHawsasi, 2017). Previously, theorists focussed their attention on English being the vehicle of ‘westernisation’ that undermines local culture (Kubota, 2002; Altbach, 2003). Suspicion about English is often raised in association with the socio-historic memory of its Orientalist agenda (Said, 1978), which has fuelled the ongoing debates in the Gulf Arab context, especially in recognition of the neoliberal influences of English (Piller, 2017) in HE internationalisation. The RQ5 findings challenge the notion that English is negatively perceived in KSA by concerned conservative parents who want to ‘protect’ their children from western influences.

The emerging theme of ‘empowerment versus linguistic imperialism’ helps answer RQ5, which examines Saudi women EFL learners. This study extends investment theory into the cultural context of KSA. English is perceived by L2 learners as ‘a good investment’ (Darvin and Norton, 2015), but RQ5 findings extend this point with the concept of ‘empowerment’. I start by discussing learner perceptions of English in terms of ‘empowerment’ and its sociocultural impacts for Saudi women.

As discussed in Chapter 6, the Saudi learners in this study explained how English is perceived positively, by using metaphors, such as, ‘a key’, ‘an adapter’, ‘a passport’ and as ‘a weapon.’ Their perceptions of English through the use of metaphors are particularly insightful because they relate to highly contentious issues in KSA at the time of the study (see Section 1.4.4 and 1.4.5). RQ5 findings suggest ‘empowerment’, which captures the perceived sociocultural impact that English language competence can have in changing women’s standing in society. The concept of ‘empowerment’ has appeared in language and culture debates before (Dörnyei and Nemeth, 2006; Kramsch, 2014a; Darvin and Norton, 2015) thought not specifically in the Saudi context with female students. In the research context, the metaphors of ‘a passport’ and as ‘a weapon’ for English might have been chosen to reveal how English proficiency can address certain gender issues for women (see Section 1.3.3). Bilingualism in English and Arabic, two highly regarded LF languages, was perceived to positively influence the role of women in Saudi society, especially concerning gender-related issues (see

Section 1.3.3). As suggested by some participants in this study, if Saudi women become bilingual, English proficiency helps them to engage as global citizens because it grants Saudi women unique access to intercultural opportunities. They commented on how it allows them to move beyond the boundaries of their language, nation, and traditions. These participants expressed the belief that their competence in English would directly enhance their potential in contributing professionally to Saudi society.

RQ5 findings also showed that speaking English fluently is perceived as an indicator of 'being educated' and it is perceived as a status symbol in some families. It is much admired in mothers and daughters alike. This finding shows that Saudi women are perceived to be more highly regarded in certain social situations if they speak English fluently. English fluency is claimed to be positively perceived by the parents of these learners. It was shown that as daughters, they were encouraged by their fathers and mothers to achieve English language fluency. It was suggested that their family members also believe English is essential for their future livelihoods in a globalised world, by increasing their 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991). This finding shows that these learners were motivated to 'invest' into learning English from an early age, as their families perceived it as having 'a good return' in their future. Furthermore, these learners unanimously confirmed that after achieving this language learning objective, their English language competence had given them unique access to hitherto unattainable resources as Saudi women. Therefore, RQ5 findings support 'investment theory' (Darvin and Norton, 2015), because these Saudi learners claimed that after learning English, they had acquired something indispensable for their future.

English language competence is perceived to be a 'commodity' (Heller, 2010) and a powerful 'gateway' language for other goal-orientated learning behaviours (see Section 2.4.1). This point suggests that English may not be perceived merely as a second language required to progress in tertiary education alone. It is perceived as 'a key' to more job opportunities and is believed by these participants to influence the social mobility of female entrepreneurs and professionals in KSA. This study supports claims that English language competence is recognised collectively in the Gulf Arab context as a valuable marketable 'commodity' (Heller, 2010; Barnawi, 2012, 2015; Barnawi and Al-Hawsawi, 2017). These learners also perceived English as a 'commodity' (Heller, 2010) and claimed it is becoming increasingly indispensable in their predominantly Arabic-speaking Saudi society, compared to a generation ago.

This study supports notions that learning English relates to external pressures, which are endemic to the socio-political and economic forces of late capitalism (Bourdieu, 1991; Piller and Cho, 2013). Based on concepts found in the emerging themes, such as 'linguistic imperialism' and 'exclusion', the learners in this study recognised that, without English, a person in their society is perceived as disadvantaged. From the emerging theme of 'linguistic imperialism' and 'exclusion', the learners asserted that there are negative consequences. The metaphors they provided, such as 'blind', 'cut off', 'in a bubble', describe the

recognition of English as an LF, and its inherent power to exclude those who do not speak it. This power creates unfairness and even discrimination against those who do not speak English or who cannot 'keep up' with the changing times. The language barrier excludes those who cannot speak English fluently, so English can also be perceived as a 'luxury' by those who cannot speak it. In this study, learners claim that without some mastery of English, they would not have had the same educational or professional opportunities (see Section 7.6, further research). They suggest that the previous generation is deprived of opportunities because they do not speak English and cannot engage in cultural globalisation (see Section 2.1.2). The disadvantage this causes was a concern, as EMI courses were perceived as unfair to non-native Arab learners because English proficiency becomes essential to graduate in certain fields of study, despite studying in an Arabic-speaking environment. The ability to obstruct further education gives institutions the power to use English as a 'gatekeeper', as current literature in other studies has already suggested (Canagarajah 1999a; Holborow 1999; Block and Cameron, 2002).

The abovementioned findings discuss the perception of English by Saudi learners. I now explain how Saudi learners use English on two levels: the 'sociocultural level' and the 'personal level' as revealed from this study. First, they use English on the sociocultural level, i.e. background knowledge and notions of different cultures. For example, in their studies for its academic resources and English-only publications. Therefore they use English for its value of 'instrumentality' (Dörnyei and Nemeth, 2006). Also, they use English in their personal lives to engage in activities of 'cultural interest' (Dörnyei and Nemeth, 2006), i.e. a curiosity in big C culture and small c culture of English-speaking societies. English is used mostly to interact online, read English newspapers about global issues, play MMOGs in un-segregated teams, watch documentaries on cultures and even other religions and for social networking. The learners mainly use English to connect to the rest of the world with people of different cultures; this would suggest that it is used as a means of global citizenship. This study shows how English is used in their daily life, not only for activities of recreation and connection with others (Dörnyei, 2009), but it also presents findings that show how English helps them achieve other goal-orientated learning behaviours.

English is also used on the 'personal level', i.e. motivation, value, affection, self-actualisation and identity formation. The RQ5 findings show these learners were driven by a strong sense of 'milieu' (importance of English as perceived by friends and parents). Using English influenced their self-esteem because it was said to increase social standing in their family because of the way the participants' families positively perceive English proficiency. These participants showed how, in attaining their aspiration of becoming bilingual, it directly influenced their self-esteem or 'linguistic self-confidence' (Dörnyei, 2009). They expressed an anxiety-free belief in their English language competence, claiming they had achieved a personal goal since childhood. Therefore they had reached 'a sense of self' and 'subjectivity' (Darvin and Norton, 2015, p. 21), both of which

could be linked to 'self-attainment', i.e. realising personal aspirations. This last point suggests they use English 'in front of others' and 'for others' as various reference groups for them (Dörnyei, 2009). Arguably, these learners might have internalised these social expectations through a desire for 'conformity' (Boyatzis and Akrivou, 2006; Dörnyei, 2009) as English language fluency is perceived as 'a symbol of success' by significant others.

Nonetheless, it positively reinforced the learners' self-esteem in using English and led to their identity formation. They also felt bilingualism had unlocked their potential to become what Dörnyei (2009) would describe as 'their ideal self'. In contrast, the learners' use of the metaphors of being 'blind', 'cut off' and 'in a bubble' indicate the opposing learner motivation of the 'feared self' (Oyserman and Markus, 1990). Here, the 'feared self' uses a 'prevention focus' to help avoid a future self that encompasses what is least acceptable in individuals' self-concept (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 13). The Saudi participants perhaps feared that if they could not learn English, they would fail to become 'their ideal self'. They had a 'childhood ideal self' to live up to, and ambition of becoming bilingual, which if not accomplished would, in turn, exclude them from their 'idealised future self'. Therefore, in a sense, their 'feared selves' also motivated them to achieve 'their bilingual ideal self' and guided the EFL learner away from the threat of being 'cut off', 'blind' or 'excluded'.

Thus, RQ5 findings connect to learner motivation and Possible Selves theory (see Section 2.4.1). The theorists cited above help anchor the new insights gained from this qualitative study into theoretical discussions, and it adds to present debates. Using English in everyday life shows how informal learning reinforces language acquisition and helps gain greater English language competence. English is no longer a language choice for the Saudi youth but a compulsory subject from primary school to tertiary education (see Section 1.3.3).

### **7.2.2 Findings for RQ6**

#### **RQ6 How is globalisation understood and experienced by Saudi women as EFL learners in KSA?**

The concepts of 'transformation' and 'exclusion' are taken from the emerging themes to help answer RQ6, in describing how globalisation is *understood* by Saudi women EFL learners. The concept of 'transformation' connects to how globalisation is understood because it is a term encompassing the changes in the tangible and intangible forms of globalisation (see Section 2.2). This study showed that the impacts of globalisation are not perceived as negatively as presented in studies on this research context (Farzaneh and Moghadam, 2003; Baki, 2004; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Mirhosseini, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Barnawi, 2015a; Banawi and AlHawsasi, 2017). As already discussed, the participants' parents not only encouraged their daughters to learn English with native speakers but encouraged their digital literacy and usage of the internet and other mediums for informal learning from a young age. The concept of 'exclusion' shows these Saudi women were not 'excluded' from cultural globalisation,

despite the religious policing of *Hisbah* (faith-based censorship of the internet) and the patterns of censorship imposed by the Saudi government throughout the period corresponding to their childhood. Instead, in their families, the use of Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook or YouTube was not forbidden as *haram* (see Section 1.4.4). As a result, they did not seem excluded from global media trends. Moreover, they demonstrated the globalisation is fully understood by being digitally competent, discerning global citizens, who are critically aware of the positive and negative impacts of globalisation.

The RQ6 findings challenge western teachers' assumptions that Saudi women students are excluded from many impacts of globalisation because they are perceived as protected from common digital practices and global trends. It also adds new considerations to scholarly debates which focus on dichotomous arguments about globalisation, claiming it is culturally undermining and negatively affecting Saudi learners (see Section 2.2.2). In this study, cultural globalisation was not perceived as a threat to their local Saudi identity or in their community. Instead, in their discussion of globalisation, it was made clear that while English holds a powerful position in the Saudi society, it does not diminish the importance of their Saudi cultural identity or their language heritage from the perspective of these Saudi women. These Saudi women expressed pride in their strong nationalist identification, 'valuing language as a symbol and element of cultural identity' (Duchêne and Heller, 2012, p. 76). Despite the perceived importance of English as described above, Arabic still retains higher importance, being of unparalleled status as the language of the Holy Qur'an and their mother tongue and thus at the heart of their language heritage. Cultural globalisation was still evidently a contentious issue at the time, but they perceived cultural globalisation more positively than what is often presented in academic circles.

Through the emerging theme 'transformation versus exclusion', this study showed that the debate about 'the threat of English' (Farzaneh and Moghadam, 2003; Baki, 2004; Al-Seghayer, 2005; Mirhosseini, 2008; Elyas, 2008; Elyas and Picard, 2010; Barnawi, 2015a; Banawi and AlHawsasi, 2017) is becoming somewhat outdated. From RQ5 and RQ6 findings, it seems their cultural identity is not undermined but is instead expanding, to encompass what could be termed, a 'glocal' identity (Robertson, 1992; Robertson and White, 1992, 2007; Blommaert, 2010). RQ5 and RQ6 findings were surprising, as my inquiry into English and globalisation was based on my experience of how Saudi women are presented to the new western teachers. Saudi learners in this study appeared to understand the impact of globalisation on their culture, were shown to be active global citizens and were more digitally active than assumed by their western teachers. They were using English in their daily lives for informal learning and recreational activities, all of which is contrary to what western teachers are told during their orientation sessions. As a result, western influences have long been entering their lives from an early age, through movies, music and pop culture trends. My study suggests that, from an insider perspective of those directly involved, 'the threat of English' is not present in their lives, but rather they expressed a fear of being 'excluded' from global trends. To help answer RQ6, in

describing how globalisation is *experienced* by Saudi women EFL learners, my study explored the perception and usage of English as discussed above in relation to RQ5. It was found that Saudi learners in this study used English on a 'sociocultural level' and a 'personal level'. Saudi women EFL learners experienced the intangible impacts of cultural globalisation, having internalised the abstract concept of a glocal identity in rhetoric and discourses online and were fully conversant with the tangible resources and tools of globalisation. Therefore, globalisation was experienced as mainly positive with regards to its immediate impact on their lives. They understood how to use mediums and channels of the globalised order as they seemed to navigate alternating norms in their daily realities effectively. This study shows how women in the Saudi context effectively 'manage a complexity of competing norms' (Blommaert, 2010, 2013), that adds 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1991) to their lives. However, it also shows that they experience negative impacts of globalisation on Saudi society. The participants in this study perceived English as encompassing diverse cultural associations, which aligns with the previous discussion (see Section 2.2.2) 'that language is a vehicle of culture' (Hofstede, 1986). Likewise, cultural globalisation is understood and experienced 'as a vehicle of cultural narratives', whereby it can be used to foster a greater understanding of cultural differences or employed as a divisive weapon of defence in political rhetoric, which will be discussed in RQ7.

### **7.2.3 Findings for RQ7**

#### **RQ7 What are the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English?**

Findings for RQ5 and RQ6 showed how Saudi women in this study discerned the positive and negative impacts of English and globalisation. In answering RQ7, findings suggest that sociocultural perceptions and attitudes changed after learning English in that Saudi women were more aware of depictions of them as women in KSA. Specifically, they criticised channels of globalisation, such as mainstream media, to be propagating negative depictions of Arab women, Saudi women and of Muslims more generally. They also disliked how media can present biased representations of their country, for deliberately depicting KSA as 'a country of terrorism' or romanticised as a 'country of mystery' (see Section 6.2.6). They seemed protective of their heritage language, religious beliefs and Muslim value system, and they demonstrated a close alignment with their religious-cultural paradigm as Saudi citizens. Rather than being undermined by negative impacts of cultural globalisation, it seemed this perceived attack on their national identity or conservative culture only served to reinforce their local cultural identity further. They were aware of how the media can fuel prejudice, marginalise or depict their cultural heritage with biased representations, as well as negatively depict Saudi women as passive 'victims' of their society (Mishra, 2007).

It was not possible to accurately measure how much their sociocultural attitudes changed after learning English, as they had been exposed to cultural globalisation much earlier on than initially expected and cultural globalisation had

been influencing them since early childhood. Inside the EFL classroom in Saudi HEIs, they were somewhat restricted by conservative norms, but through their channels of informal learning, they developed their glocal identity. Therefore, it was less apparent in the learner cohort how their learner attitudes changed after learning English because it was an accumulation of many years of exposure to diverse sociocultural influences. The main finding for RQ7 is that from learning English, these learners were more critically aware of 'othering' (Abu-Lughod, 2001; Said, 2003; Charise, 2007; Nurullah, 2010; Cañado, 2010; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014). What became evident through the emerging theme of 'othering versus likeness' was that by becoming fluent in English, they could better understand how others perceive them and their culture. Concerning the changes in the sociocultural perceptions and attitudes of Saudi women after learning English, the main finding is they become more aware of cultural attitudes and 'othering' towards them as Muslims and as Saudi women. Also, the Saudi learners became aware of the othering of westerners by fellow Saudis but also othering of Saudis if they cannot speak English. The emerging theme of 'othering', was discussed for cohort 1, but these findings extend to how EFL classroom interactions shape attitudes and sociocultural perceptions. Awareness of 'othering' has been observed in the learners' experience with their western women EFL teachers.

Furthermore, these learners were aware of their western teachers' ethnocentric attitudes and how their teachers perceive them in stereotypical ways. They were aware of an orientalist attitude of some western teachers who, despite relocating to an Arabic-speaking country, 'come expecting 'everyone' (i.e. Saudis, Arabs) to speak English'. This point supports previous claims, that 'linguistic imperialism' and 'othering' are present in the Saudi context (Abu-Lughod, 2001; Said, 2003; Charise, 2007; Nurullah, 2010; Cañado, 2010; Chowdhury and Le Ha, 2014). In other words, through learning and teaching English, the learners and teachers became especially self-conscious of the 'othering' of women. Both teachers and learners observed how negatively Saudi women are depicted, the otherisation of Saudi men and their society's image in western media. However, at the same time, their sociocultural attitudes became more tolerant of misperceptions and resilient to othering discourses. Similar to cohort 1, there were moments of perceived 'likeness', here suggesting a feeling of gender-based affinity towards women of a different ethnic group. This corresponds with feelings of commonality with western women whom the Saudi women EFL learners befriend. They perceived Saudi and western women as similar, despite the significant differences in world view and cultural customs.

Saudi women EFL learners in this study stated that if they could discuss 'real intercultural issues' in their classroom with their western teachers, their L2 experience would be much more interesting. While it was a rare occurrence, the learners described their classroom experience more positively when there were instances of intercultural sharing. This point connects to motivation theory that 'sense of enjoyment' is a strong L2 motivator (Dörnyei, 2006). Learning English in a Saudi HEI brings Saudi EFL learners into 'direct contact with L1 speakers'

(Dörnyei, 2006, p. 26), and being taught for the first time by native speakers and with so many different English-speaking countries to learn about invokes genuine excitement in Saudi learners. However, what happens when they have an EFL teacher who is aloof, distant and does not discuss anything related to her culture? The opportunity for the cultivation of 'cultural competence' is lost (Byram, 2000; Kramsch, 2014b).

Some learners shifted their sociocultural attitudes towards an affinity, or 'likeness', that can be used as an intercultural tool to counter-balance othering. The learners could perceive their linguistic knowledge of English as a 'bank of sociocultural associations' (Kramsch, 2014b) which can be accessed, selectively filtered and incorporated into their glocal identity. Rather than undermining their cultural identity as Saudi women, English may help reinforce their glocal identity. As earlier findings suggest, Saudi learners are more critically aware of their sociocultural 'footprint', and the impact of globalisation on their local identity than perhaps scholars have hitherto given them credit for. Their awareness of their attitude and perceptions also helps them become 'mediators' for bicultural issues. These learners can use their bilingualism to promote more intercultural East-West understanding online and challenge gender-related misperceptions as Saudi Muslim women in virtual forums and chatrooms. The concept of 'othering' was acknowledged in EFL practice by both the teachers and learners in these cohorts.

The main sociocultural change experienced by them after learning English was that they were able to position their own cultural identity in relation to other cultural identities more objectively. The learners in my study had a greater awareness of othering discourses in global media, and English helped them navigate their identity as global citizens. This linguistic ability has an important place in better protecting their local language and cultural identity on the frontier of globalisation.

The findings related to 'exclusion' revealed that because these learners seek out their teachers in private to discuss 'taboo' issues, there is a need to discuss culturally sensitive issues more openly (Timina and Butler, 2011). It is equally important to create confidential spaces to help learners with personal problems. It is not advisable for FL teachers to avoid culturally sensitive topics. Instead, the educational policies connected to cultural sensitivity could be revisited.

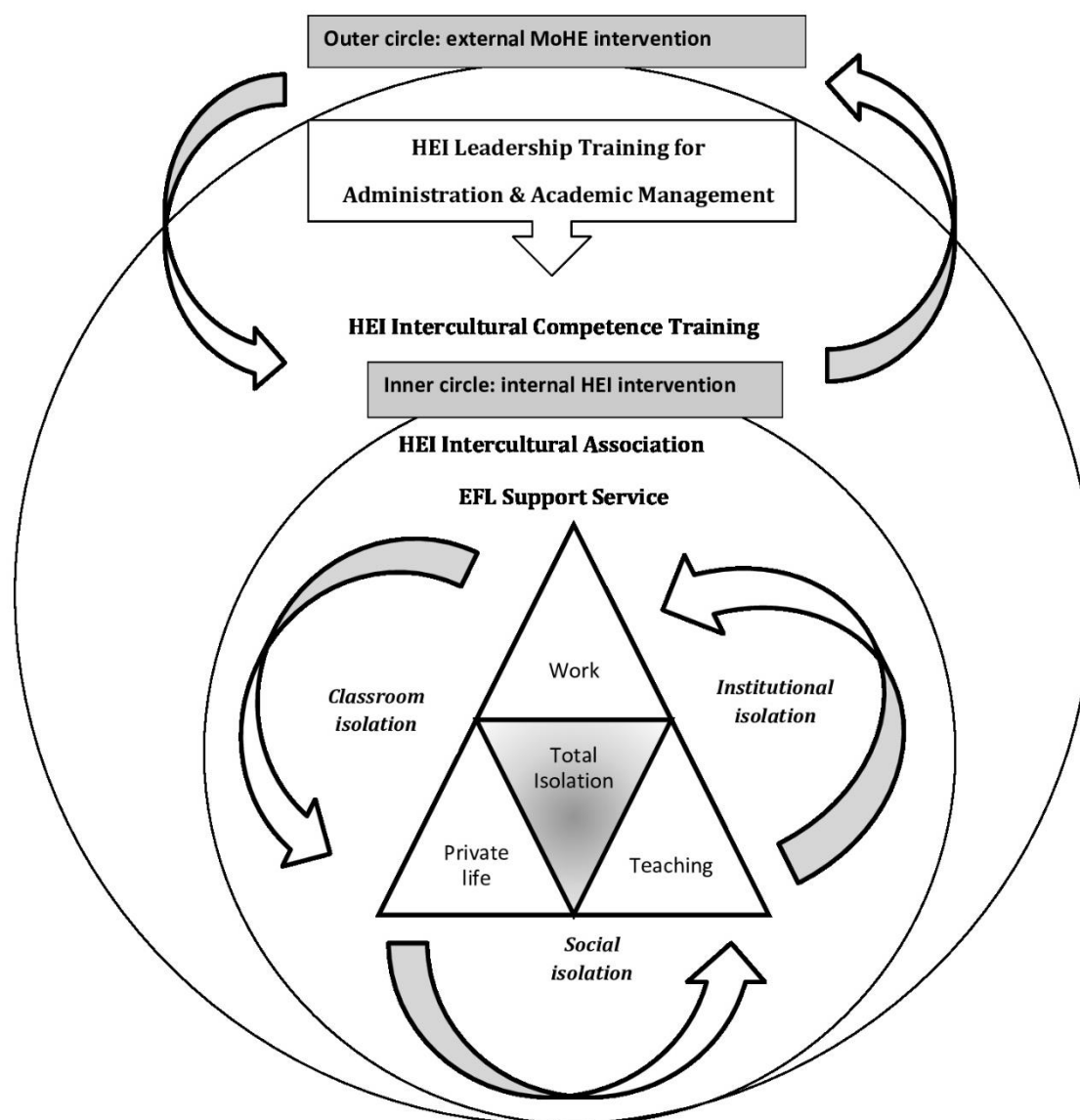
## **7.3 Recommendations for HEI policy in KSA**

### ***7.3.1 Recommendations: the western women EFL teacher cohort***

I will now present the implications of the findings for policy. I will discuss these in reference to RQ1–4. I have diagrammatically described the recommendations for policy referred to in the following sections (see Figure 25).



Figure 25 Recommendations for women in Higher Education in KSA



To describe the recommendations for internal HEI intervention, I start at the centre of Figure 25, in reference to the inner circle:

#### Inner circle: internal HEI intervention

- (i) *EFL Support Service*
- (ii) *HEI Intercultural Association*

To describe the recommendations for external MoHE interventions, I move upwards from the inner circle to the outer circle:

#### Outer circle: external MoHE intervention

- (iii) *HEI Intercultural Competence Training*
- (iv) *HEI Leadership Training for Administration and EFL Management*

I now describe each recommendation in the same order (i) to (iv), as stated above:

*(i) EFL Support Service*

Findings for RQ1–2, on the acculturation process, suggest that there is a need to provide better social support for new western women EFL teachers. Social support would help teachers to integrate better into their living quarters and the various departments within the Saudi HEI. A suggestion could be to establish an 'EFL Support Service' (see Figure 25) within the Saudi HEI which caters specifically for the holistic wellbeing of newly recruited foreign faculty members immigrating to live and work in KSA. This service would be a preventative measure against foreseeable problems that collectively affect new teachers in an unfamiliar setting. The 'EFL Support Service' could help provide an induction course into Saudi culture and Saudi customs, as my data on 'pre-service attitudes' showed that 'cultural interest' was high. The social support service would encourage inter-cultural dialogues and greater understanding that prevents frustration in private and work life. More importantly, it can provide counselling for symptoms of culture shock.

*(ii) HEI Intercultural Association*

Drawing on the findings, increasing opportunities to integrate into the local community could improve the overall experience for foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs. The findings from RQ1 demonstrate that when some teachers in cohort 1 found ways to sublimate the external pressures of an unfamiliar culture, they acculturated considerably better. Therefore, if acculturation activities were more systemically introduced by the Saudi HEI when new western women EFL teachers arrive, it could help them integrate more effectively from the start. One possible way to do this would be to establish an 'HEI intercultural association' (see Figure 25) to engage Saudi faculty members and western women in language and cultural courses. This exchange would not only help facilitate their integration into the local community but also helps create a positive 'middle culture' (Holliday, 1999, 2009, 2010) between expatriates and Saudis. It could serve to bridge those perceived divides by, for example, providing Arabic–English language exchanges and interdepartmental team activities in enhancing camaraderie. Moreover, by increasing intercultural understanding, a greater sense of belonging to the female-only campus and engaging in the HEI community might prevent a 'teacher-as-a-tourist' or 'exilic' identity from developing in foreign faculty members.

This suggestion also aims at helping women connect to other women, to foster 'likeness', which helps challenge ethnocentric notions and stereotyping. Fostering 'likeness' would help western and Saudi women re-evaluate any misconceptions or preconceived notions from mainstream media. Fostering intercultural awareness in EFL teaching in Saudi HEIs could help reduce possible ethnocentric orientations that come from misrepresentations. By recognising that such issues exist, EFL practice might be better able to approach how to deal with racism, prejudice and othering. It could help EFL teachers adapt to the 'high-

context culture' in faculty departments and deanships more effectively and build up trust, teamwork and positive regard.

### *(iii) HEI Intercultural Competence Training*

Providing 'HEI Intercultural Competence Training' to all faculty members might help minimise miscommunication or cultural misunderstanding and aid in effective conflict resolution. This training could help reduce the isolation teachers feel in the institution. 'Intercultural Competence Training' workshops (see Figure 25) for newly recruited teachers may also help reduce ethnocentrism and otherisation in teaching practice. 'Intercultural Competence Training' workshops could train all faculty members on 'strategies for cultural sensitivity' for this teaching context. This training would practically assist educators in dealing with personal issues that may arise with learners in their EFL classroom. At the time of the study, the cultural sensitivity guidelines enforced certain levels of censorship and control. A recommendation, therefore, is to offer western teachers more intercultural training to help them deal with the sociocultural challenges they face in everyday practice. Creating a partnership in cultural sensitivity in the Saudi classroom, protecting local culture while educating students in Saudi HEIs with the valuable 'cultural resources' that foreign faculty staff have, would enrich the learning experience and increase global citizenship. If western women EFL teachers were more engaged as potential cultural competence trainers, HEIs could develop their 'multilingual mindsets' and further 'intercultural competence' (Kramsch, 2011) in both teachers and learners.

### *(iv) HEI Leadership Training for Administration and EFL Management*

In discussing the findings for RQ2, a recommendation would be intercultural management training, stemming from observations in earlier research (Assad, 2002; Badry and Willoughby, 2015). By focussing on 'HEI leadership training for administration and EFL management' (see Figure 25), awareness of intercultural differences between high- and low-context cultures could be addressed. Strategies could be implemented to maintain fairness and avoid discrimination, such as ensuring that managerial systems and leadership in EFL departments are clearly explained to all faculty members during orientation. Also recommended is the implementation of transparent internal procedures to deal with intercultural misunderstandings, such as the Foreign Staff Appeal Procedure. Such an improvement in intercultural communications would greatly benefit the workplace, and such procedures could be overseen by an independent board (i.e. outside the English department), which deals specifically with student/staff complaints. This body would be responsible for improving the working conditions by increasing teacher-learner trust and addressing any fear-based culture in the work environment.

## **7.3.2 Recommendations: The Saudi women EFL learner cohorts**

I will now discuss the implications for policy from the findings of the Saudi women EFL learner cohort. The implications are suggested in reference to RQ5–7.

As noted earlier, RQ5 addressed the learners' use and perceptions of English. This study shows that in various ways, English language competence helps these learners adopt greater goal-directed behaviour. As they increased their level of language competence, their fluency in English was perceived to directly affect their status as women in Saudi society, contributing to their personal development and identity. The implication for policy is to acknowledge how much 'investment' an L2 student makes in learning English and the encouragement of their families from their childhoods can help their language proficiency in later life.

RQ6 also explored these learners' digital practices outside the classroom and their informal learning. In terms of understanding globalisation, the main implication for policy is to represent Saudi women EFL learners more realistically as digitally active global citizens to their EFL teachers. From my study, I perceived that the learners' *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* motivations to learn English were obvious, but I found that the L2 motivations of 'cultural interest' and 'instrumentality' were unexpected. Therefore, I believe that if L2 motivations of 'cultural interest' are incorporated more into the EFL classroom in learner-centred ways, it would greatly enhance EFL practice.

In discussing these findings, the study highlights that, in HE policy, Saudi women EFL learners need more opportunities to enhance their critical thinking skills in L2 discussion, particularly about 'uncomfortable topics' (Timina and Butler, 2011). At the same time, 'cultural competence' needs to be developed in western women EFL teachers so they can reduce learners' discomfort when confronted by taboo topics (Byram and Risager, 1999; Haynes, 2000; Byram, 2000; Timina and Butler, 2011). At best, language learning incorporates the practice of discussing opposing viewpoints and modelling disagreements in conversation, to make learning outcomes in Saudi HE education more 'life-like'. This approach in teaching is argued to be an indispensable skill required for the present era of globalisation, moving forward towards that of 'new intercultural awareness' (Byram, 2000, p. 10).

Drawing from findings related to RQ7, the main implication for policy is that the sociocultural attitude of 'likeness' can be used as an intercultural tool to counter-balance othering in EFL practice. Fostering 'likeness' in the classroom is beneficial to both learners and teachers. However, Saudi women navigate the virtual spaces that challenge traditional norms already and are familiar with diverse issues that challenge their cultural identity and religious paradigm. Instead, teaching strategies on how to form a more resilient local identity against the undermining influences of cultural globalisation, othering and social media could be taught more specifically within the university setting. This process would help anchor Saudi women, EFL learners in their own local culture and make them more resilient against the negative impacts of cultural globalisation. This is an approach that empowers 'learners to undertake the analysis of relevant social dimensions for themselves' (Baynham, Cooke and Simpson, 2011, cited in Badwan, 2017, p. 199). Concerning my study, the 'conscious learning approach' (Baynham et al., 2011) could be proposed as a possible way to explore new

ways of introducing 'sociocultural level learning' in the Saudi EFL classroom. However, this approach and its application are outside the scope of this study.

## 7.4 Implications for EFL practice

After analysing the implications for HE policy in KSA, in this section I give recommendations for teachers and learners in Saudi EFL practice. Alamri (2011) stated almost a decade ago that Saudi HE policy should instigate 'different teaching strategies'. However, teaching and L2 experiences demonstrate that more can be done. Therefore, this section focusses on practical recommendations in the form of classroom interventions in EFL practice.

### 7.4.1 Implications for teaching

The findings for western EFL women teachers showed how certain factors compromised EFL practice in Saudi HEIs. With regards to western EFL women teachers, the findings on *isolation* were illustrated in Figure 24 (see Section 6.1.1) and again in Figure 25 (see Section 7.3.1).

The four areas of isolation for teachers were:

- (i) *Social isolation*
- (ii) *Classroom isolation*
- (iii) *Institutional isolation*
- (iv) *Total isolation.*

I will describe each point in more detail in the order listed above.

#### (i) *Social isolation*

The process of acculturation (Wright, 2005) is a pursuit mainly driven by the individual and, therefore, largely depends on the teacher's own willingness to integrate into the local community. The primary reason for moving to KSA may not be enough if driven only by *extrinsic* motivation (i.e. tax-free salary and benefits). Still, if combined with *intrinsic* motivation and *altruistic* motivation, then western teachers most probably acculturate better. As recommended by the teachers in this study, pursuing their 'cultural interest' motivation helps to mitigate feelings of social isolation. In times of frustration, negative feelings or intercultural challenges can overwhelm newly recruited teachers, seeking support from outside the workplace as recommended by experienced teachers. The changes in sociocultural perceptions of Saudi society and culture were striking; the acculturation process showed teachers' perception and attitudes move away from the teacher as a 'tourist' in KSA, to the teacher as a 'mediator', in some cases. It shows how first-hand cultural immersion helped these teachers challenge their stereotypes of the host culture, i.e. seeing the "good" and "bad" elements in both the home and new cultures (Wright, 2005) leading to more open-mindedness. Open-mindedness gives EFL teachers greater intercultural competence and helps them integrate better into unfamiliar cultural settings, where they can fulfil a new role of EFL teachers as 'cultural mediators' in an age of globalisation.

### *(ii) Classroom isolation*

It was noted that teaching could become 'teacher-centred' and 'top-down' which may limit learners' creativity if taught uniformly. This pedagogical approach was probably used because these teachers decided to maintain the 'status quo' of the organisational culture and were afraid to 'teach outside the box'. Censorship can limit teachers' creativity in the classroom. Cultural sensitivity in the classroom is an ongoing debate, as discussed earlier. Still, if teachers are considered more as valuable intercultural assets and not as a threat, the cultural divide between teachers and learners would be addressed. Practical mechanisms to involve teachers in creating and designing acceptable cultural resources which are internally approved would give teachers more agency and confidence in the classroom.

Saudi HEI facilities are fitted with the state-of-the-art e-podiums which promote interactive language learning. However, the usage of these modern tools is limited; teachers could be trained to use technology platforms and not rely on traditional pedagogy. This process would help motivate learners in innovative ways, rather than sticking to a very narrow range of textbooks. E-learning and telecollaboration with multi-modal learning can be used to enhance the L2 learning experience further and motivate L2 learners. The proposal for practice, therefore, is to train teachers in blended learning, incorporating more mixed audio-visual digital mediums and encourage EFL learners to use their informal language learning digital practices in their language studies. HE policy might implement new strategies to increase L2 motivation in lectures, such as gender-segregated telecollaborative resources, which simultaneously increase learner-centred approaches and learner motivation in the Saudi EFL classroom.

Recognising informal learning and using more blended learning in the classroom can make lessons more enriching for both teachers and learners. EFL teachers could help develop the digital portfolio of resources to incorporate more blended learning in the classroom. A recommendation for teachers would be to offer workshops and training sessions in their respective HEI on how to incorporate blended-learning mediums, i.e. audio-visual material (Ngiam et al., 2011) and how to use e-platforms in teaching practice with adherence to cultural sensitivity guidelines of their respective Saudi HEI. Saudi HEIs can provide EFL teachers with an official portfolio of approved digital media or provide shared access to an e-learning platform with e-learning resources, i.e. audio-visual material, to incorporate blended learning in the classroom (Block and Cameron, 2002; Meyer, 2007). Blended-learning approaches are encouraged because FL learners benefit from using e-platforms promoting telecollaborative activities (Kramsch, 2011) through virtual classrooms (e.g. Edmodo, Blackboard, Google classrooms) and through learning applications (e.g. Duolingo). Implementing changes gradually by using recognised programmes such as *Edmodo* help facilitate teachers' interactions outside the classroom. Such programmes increase social rapport in alignment with HE regulations and maintain professional boundaries.

Teachers can implement a reward system for task-related activities or participation (i.e. alternative assessment), which builds up the teacher-learner rapport through an interactive virtual 'classroom'. Teachers should encourage creative pedagogy and innovation (Rababah, 2002; Cañado, 2010; Mekheimer, 2011; Al-Surmi, 2014; van Marsenille, 2015; Sharifan, 2015). In the 'HEI intercultural training', western EFL teachers can create a portfolio of approved blended-learning activities that formally facilitate greater discussion of culture in the classroom, thereby including their own glocal identities more effectively for language acquisition. Digital medium resources should spark authentic 'cultural interest' and increase 'enjoyment' as primary L2 motivators. The focus of digital medium resources should incorporate big C and little c culture content into task-related activities, but these resources must not infringe cultural sensitivity.

### *(iii) Institutional isolation*

Regarding the 'altruist' motivation or 'the ideal teacher self', working within the HEI in designing extra-mural activities for student personal development would channel teachers' motivation into helping Saudi learners in English debate clubs; 'arts and culture club' could promote learners' artistic pursuits locally. English book clubs could be run by teachers to increase discussions more analytically by using literature to harness students' cultural interest motivation. Teachers can help EFL learners organise English film clubs where informal learning is encouraged through entertainment in English, following Saudi HEI policy. Teachers could be involved in more communicative activities in the Foundation Year curriculum to increase the global competence of Saudi women EFL learners. For example, western EFL teachers can be editors of a campus newspaper that publishes articles on global issues written in English by undergraduates in Preliminary Year Programmes. These projects would develop their critical thinking and writing skills as well as provide invaluable opportunities to increase their global competence. Western women EFL teachers would be instrumental in enhancing their glocal identity, and more importantly, Saudi women EFL learners would be welcomed into the EFL classroom as active global citizens. In this way, teachers can develop more dynamic lessons to transform EFL teaching into a way to develop global competence and help Saudi women compete internationally in job markets. Being involved in the bigger system through clubs could help teachers integrate better and feel less isolated in the Saudi HEI.

The resistance towards the Saudi HEI could also be due to other unstudied factors. Little is done in the recruitment process to analyse the 'pre-service' motivation of teachers emigrating to this context. It is a significant factor which is largely overlooked by both the recruitment agencies and the Saudi HEIs. Recruiters could be more aware of teacher motivation in the interview process of potential candidates seeking to work in KSA, as this study evidenced implicit motivations drove teachers to emigrate in KSA, such as 'saving' or 'rescuing' Saudi women. As stated, this often 'blinds them culturally to their teaching reality'

(Wright, 2005, p. 33). It is equally important to recognise the influence of mainstream media in teachers' homelands and try to provide richer resources that challenges the preconceived notions of western women.

Regarding the 'rebel' or 'reformer' impulse of western teachers working within an educational system different to their own, it is recommended to adhere closely to norms and customs within the Saudi HEI, and to self-regulate any grievance or complaint very carefully.

*(iv) Total isolation*

A final recommendation for teachers who leave KSA with a feeling of 'total isolation' is to recognise the entire acculturation process she has undergone. Teaching experience in Saudi HEIs is highly individual and cannot be generalised. However, it is necessary to recognise any symptoms of 'separation-from-self' (Wright, 2005; Bekhet, et al., 2008), to seek counselling and professional support in the post-service period following resignation or termination. If such experiences are left unresolved, it can affect the teacher in a myriad of ways.

#### **7.4.2 Implications for L2 learning experience**

The main recommendation is for Saudi HEIs to recognise how much 'cultural interest' is motivating L2 learners outside the classroom. While EFL learners in Saudi HEIs may not engage in the discussion of 'culture' in the classroom with western teachers, their informal learning outside the classroom is motivated by mainly 'cultural interest'. The usage of *real* English beyond the classroom was evident in the findings. This point reveals that they may use their English language fluency well beyond their tertiary education in their academic pursuits, and instead they use English in their personal lives. Overall, they use their English language competence to engage with more in activities of 'cultural interest' (Dörnyei, 2006). These activities include: online interactions with English speakers, reading English newspapers, playing MMOGs in English, watching films and documentaries in English to gain greater fluency and linguistic confidence.

The impact of digital innovation and an exponential expansion in telecommunications in KSA at the time of the study was evident. A recommendation is for L2 learners to use English in diverse ways, and not rely solely on EFL classrooms to teach English. If language acquisition is strictly related to academic study in this context, the learning opportunities of engagement with multiple informal learning channels are lost. This study shows that in KSA there is increased access to 'cultural products' in English (books, films, music, social networking mobile applications) which aids the attainment of higher levels of English language fluency earlier on in life. Therefore, in recognition of the power English has as 'a gatekeeper' in HE in KSA, a recommendation for young learners who struggle to learn English is to manage



digital usage outside the classroom more strategically. The learners in the present study demonstrated how they incorporated English into their hobbies and interests from a very young age. This point indicates that their families also enabled them to use different cultural products which helped to instil in them openness, cultural interest and a passion for learning English whilst very young.

This study shows the importance of parental support in allowing access to mediums and cultural products that enable language learning. Underestimating 'informal learning' could greatly reduce the potential of L2 learners long term. Another recommendation relates to the parents of Saudi L2 learners. A curiosity in big C culture and small c culture of English-speaking societies helps maintain learner motivation. If learners are given opportunities to connect with people of different cultures, this increases their global citizenship, and perhaps the relevance of becoming bilingual is further accentuated. While in the Saudi EFL classroom language acquisition may be focussing only on their 'local' identity, parents can help prioritise their *glocal* identity in their private lives, in ways that fit in comfortably with their religious paradigm and their family's customs. The L2 learners in this study had high levels of language competence in English because they were encouraged from a young age by their parents to pursue English language acquisition. As a result, they incorporated bilingualism into a future 'ideal self' and, in so doing, they did not rely solely on their teachers in school or college. Instead, they were determined to achieve their language goals. It became part of their identity because being fluent in English was perceived as part of their 'ideal self'. A recommendation, therefore, is to encourage young Saudi L2 learners at school to imagine their future selves. Parents can invest more time in encouraging informal language development at home. This parental encouragement may help motivate them to study English inside and outside the classroom. Parents could try to connect school-level language studies to greater self-awareness of their future selves, asking: why are *you* learning English? How do *you* perceive yourself in the future? Can you see yourself speaking another language fluently? This would make learning English a personal journey, instead of being swept along in the impersonal process of merely passing school exams and entering college.

## **7.5 Limitations**

### **7.5.1 Generalisability**

The findings of this study cannot be generalised to all women in HE in KSA. It does not provide quantitative data on the research issues but attempts to give answers based on the subjective perceptions and experiences of 21 participants. The sample is small but in-depth, with importance given to qualitative, not quantitative data. Also, this cohort represents only fluent English speakers in the Saudi cohort, and western teachers who had left their position as English language lecturers in HEIs. Therefore, it cannot represent all women in HE in KSA or the teaching/ learning experience in all HEIs in KSA. It is subject to

limitations due to the skewed effect of snowball sampling, recruitment challenges, language-based interference and other factors, that will now be discussed in turn.

### ***7.5.2 Snowball sampling***

This method is often criticised for limiting participant representation to a closed circle of social contacts. However, snowball sampling techniques are best suited to contexts that are challenging for social research (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005).

### ***7.5.3 Recruitment challenges***

As noted above, the snowball sampling technique is criticised for lacking systematic representation. I recruited eight ex-employees of Saudi HEIs who had already left KSA, i.e. resigned or had their contract terminated. Therefore, a significant limitation for cohort 1 is present. The justification for recruiting teachers who had decided to leave KSA was first, due to ethical considerations (see Section 3.2.1). Secondly, because of my chosen methodology, narrative inquiry, the studies are completed 'stories' (before, during and after). Nonetheless, a concern can be raised about the reliability of data collected only from teachers who had ended their employment in KSA, as it is a skewed sample and it does not investigate teachers still working in KSA. Arguably, these teachers may represent a sample of 'unhappy' employees. To better understand teaching experience in Saudi HEIs, a cohort of 'currently employed' teachers would have balanced this study. For ethical reasons this was not possible (see Section 3.2). There was little that could be done to mitigate this bias; the data nonetheless shed light on a particular set of experiences.

In order to make their teaching experience and resignation more transparent, data in the narratives captured the reasons why they left KSA and under what circumstances. In gender-segregated Saudi HEIs, a contract can be terminated on the mutual understanding that neither party wishes to renew it. From the eight participants, six teachers would have had their contracts renewed by their Saudi HEI, which evidences the teachers were considered 'fit for service' by their employers. Only two teachers were not invited to renew their contracts.

### ***7.5.4 Reliability***

The turnover of western female EFL teachers cannot be cross-referenced with official records, so the research community can only rely on these qualitative accounts. More quantitative research from human resources departments in Saudi HEIs would better evaluate the causes of high turnover of foreign faculty members in Saudi HEIs.

### ***7.5.5 Language-based interference***

Saudi participants could have expressed themselves better if the narrative inquiries were in L1. The design would have benefitted from bilingual data collection, but the cost of translating would have exceeded my resources as a self-funded researcher. The literature review was researched online, and only in English; therefore, Arabic sources may have been missed. The design is, therefore limited by 'language-based interference' (Cheng and Dornyei, 2007).

### **7.5.5.1 Transcription and coding methods**

I justified how I went about tidying up the spoken and written texts in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.5.5) and the coding methods (see Section 5.3.5).

Auditory interaction with the data occurred during the interview and by listening to the interview recording several times afterwards to listen for meaning, review interview notes, and re-read the transcriptions (Maher et al., 2018). However, along with data management capability, digitally supported methods would also have increased rigour between the mode of cognition (sequential or relational) and the mode of data interaction (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic).

As mentioned earlier (see Section 5.3.5), I decided to use a traditional coding approach (i.e. coloured pens, paper, and sticky notes, taking photos of the coding processes) for analysis instead of using digital management software, such as NVivo or Atlas.ti. While more time-consuming, this hands-on process was best suited to my research style and I found it to be more rewarding. By a hands-on approach, I did find that I was able to engage with the research material on a variety of levels, micro- to macro view, and not experience the fragmentation of the text by NVivo analysis that is often reported by researchers (Maher, et al., 2018). However, recent research often combines the traditional method that I used with the CAQDAS software, NVivo, for the analysis, to increase rigour and productive analysis (Maher, et al., 2018).

Furthermore, digitally supported methods of analysis would have increased my confidence as a researcher in having a more ‘tried and tested’ approach. I found this was evident in the diverse write-up and reviews stages that my thesis underwent. Digital data management would have been especially beneficial for its retrieval facilities over the entire duration of the doctorate.

I found the thematic analysis framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001) helpful for organising the data into different types of themes, from basic themes into superordinate themes. It was, however, at times challenging and I am aware of my subjectivity in identifying and assigning themes. I found, as many researchers do, that I had a quantity of data that had to undergo a coding process of ‘winnowing’ (Creswell, 2015, p. 160, cited in Elliott, 2018). However, the challenge was to reduce this to a manageable amount and decide what to exclude. In addition, I was sensitised to certain concepts in the process of reading the literature in preparation for my research. I used an emergent coding technique rather than *a priori* frameworks. However, based on my interpretation of the basic and organising themes that I found, I assigned global themes which could have reflected certain concepts in the current literature. For example, I was aware that the term ‘empowerment’ is laden with associations in the research context that could be interpreted differently by different individuals. Thus, I had to carefully reflect on the participants’ quotes that I had chosen, checking whether these quotes were accurate descriptors to limit researcher bias.

How a researcher codes data is an important concern related to reliability. In debates about coding reliability in qualitative research, it has been suggested that

the codes developed into definitions (i.e. global themes in my study) should be put into a framework for peer-testing, which is an invaluable way of testing the reliability of inferring codes and themes (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014, p. 84). 'As a whole, definitions become sharper when two researchers code the same data set and discuss their initial difficulties' (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014, p. 84, as cited in Elliott, 2018).

As a doctoral researcher, I conducted the thematic analysis entirely on my own in KSA, without sufficient access to campus-based resources or peer interaction. When it came to the analysis of how I derived global themes, having these definitions tested by a fellow researcher could have increased the validity and credibility of the research. I would have benefitted from having more face-to-face interaction with fellow researchers.

### ***7.5.6 Generational difference***

There was a significant age difference between the two cohorts. The average age was 20 years old for the Saudi Cohorts 2a + b, whereas, for teacher cohort 1, the average was 50 years old. This significant generational difference may have affected the data.

### ***7.5.7 Cultural interference in researcher reflexivity***

As discussed above, the language barrier I experienced as a non-Arabic-speaking researcher also doubled as a cultural barrier. As I mentioned, it could be argued that many of the sources were unavailable to the western critique of the Arab world, as many Arabic texts were not translated and therefore, unfortunately, had to be excluded. Thus, social critique by Arab women in Arabic was also excluded. The language and cultural barrier could have influenced my role as a co-producer in the interpretation of the narrative inquiry process. It is another limitation based on how I perceived and extracted findings from the data. I make the thematic analysis process transparent by using the thematic analysis theory to limit this area of contention (see Section 5.1.1). However, an important consideration in my reflexivity as a researcher is self-awareness of how I am a 'co-producer', as I designed the teacher and learner narrative frames. I constructed the frames based on my own lived experience of the journey of emigrating to KSA as a western woman EFL teacher. In order to make the research design process transparent, I discussed this in detail in my rationale (Section 1.1). I also theoretically anchored the narrative frame in the narrative structure of other narrative inquiry research (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Cortazzi, 2014). Another point to reiterate is that it is not my intention to construct a simplex or dichotomous experiential account; I am aware of the potential problems of essentialising the fields under review.

## **7.6 Further research**

Firstly, this study used qualitative methodology only, but by using a mixed-methods approach, e.g. including a quantitative survey along with the interviews or the narratives, this combination could have measured the perceptions and attitudes more extensively. A mixed-method study across various HEIs in KSA

could get a better estimation of the impact of English and globalisation in this context.

Secondly, the research design included the parental perception of English and globalisation, but it only reported this indirectly through their daughters. Initially, I hoped it would be possible to interview the mothers of Saudi participants. However, it proved too complicated for a non-Arabic speaking researcher at the time of the study. A generational dimension would give the present study extra weight, especially their perceptions of the social transitions taking place for young women and the transformations in Saudi society at present.

Thirdly, a cohort of monolingual Arabic speaking Saudi women (who do not speak English) could be examined as an extension of this present study. It would give the present study a different perspective of linguistic imperialism and exclusion, especially in considering undergraduates who had been forced to choose a different major or were blocked from continuing tertiary education because of English.

Finally, a suggestion would be to conduct the same research design on western men EFL teachers and Saudi men EFL learners in male gender-segregated Saudi HEIs. A male sample could provide an understanding of how both genders in KSA perceive English and globalisation and the extent to which these perceptions might be gender-based. Given the gender-segregation, extending the scope in this way would be particularly interesting.

## **7.7 Contribution to knowledge**

This study deepens the awareness of sociocultural impacts of cultural globalisation in this hidden, hard to reach population (Al-Kahtani et al., 2005). This research is situated in a largely unstudied context, at the forefront of potential cultural clashes. The Saudi EFL classroom is investigated from the perspective of both western women and Saudi women, which gives a balanced insider-perspective of intercultural issues in teaching and learning English. It values the experiential perspectives of those directly involved as women in HE in KSA, hitherto left out of academic debate. By inviting new voices to share their experiences as educators and as Saudi global citizens, new insights and therefore new knowledge is produced. These women are presently negotiating the transitional shifts in HE, in Saudi society, and they are navigating the impact of globalisation and English in the unique context of KSA. It thereby attempts, through qualitative inquiry, to reduce the stereotyping, othering and ethnocentrism in EFL practice (Kubota, 2002) and increase awareness of depictions of women in mainstream media and social media.

## **7.8 Chapter summary**

I concluded this thesis with a discussion of findings for western women EFL teachers and the Saudi women EFL learners in this study. I included recommendations for policy and implications for practice. I reviewed the limitations of the study, including data coding, data analysis and interpretation. I have also suggested further research in this context in order to expand on the findings of this study. I concluded with the contribution my doctoral research makes to increasing knowledge in the field, in an attempt to reduce ethnocentrism in EFL by validating the voices of teachers and learners in the specific context of KSA.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Example of EFL Job Offer in KSA (2013)

### University ESL Instructors - Saudi Arabia



Location: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Middle East

Job Status: **Open**

Estimated Start Date: **August 2013**

Eligible Candidates: **TEFL Instructor**

### Teaching Job Description

██████████ is now accepting applications for university level ESL instructor positions in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Instructors will join a multinational staff at this all-female university in the capital of Saudi Arabia, teaching English to post-secondary students as part of a Preparatory Years Program. Teachers will assist with curriculum development and student mentorship in order to improve students' English proficiency.

Successful candidates will be highly adaptable and culturally aware. Previous experience working in the Middle East is an asset, though not required. Candidates with experience creating curriculum, refining assessment methods, and providing support and guidance to language learners are preferred.

### Job Details

Monthly Salary	\$2,700-4,000 USD tax-free, depending on qualifications and experience
Contract Duration	1 year (renewable)
Subject ESL Grade Level	University

### Teaching Job Benefits

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| • Accommodation    | Provided   |
| • Airfare          | Roundtrip airfare provided; annual flights home for extended contracts |
| • Health Insurance | Comprehensive health insurance provided by employer                    |
| • Vacation         | 60 days of paid vacation; national holidays                            |
| • Bonus            | Transportation allowances and planned local outings                    |

### Qualifications

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| • Education Level         | Bachelors  |
| • Teaching Experience     | Minimum 2 years of ESL teaching experience at university level   |
| • Required Certificates   | TESL/TEFL Certificate over 100 hours   |
| • Additional Requirements | TEFL training must be 120+ hours of in-class training<br>(e.g. CELTA, DELTA, Master's degree in TESOL, etc.) |



## Appendix 2 – Embassy Declaration Form for foreign workers in KSA (2013)



### **NOTICE ON SAUDI LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

**I hereby undertake to give my fingerprints and my eye iris pattern images and comply with the laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.**

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to have my fingerprint and iris data (biometrics) captured as part of the application procedure for an entry visa to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I further agree and declare as follows:

1. If granted the visa, I shall abide by all the laws and regulations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and respect the Islamic customs and traditions of its people;
2. I am aware that all alcoholic beverages, narcotics and other illegal drugs, pornographic materials or publications that violate the social norms of decency and all other publications that are disrespectful of any religious belief or political orientation are prohibited and shall not be brought into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;
3. I am also fully aware that the crime of smuggling narcotics and other illegal drugs into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is punishable by the death penalty;
4. I have never been removed, excluded or deported from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or from any other Gulf Cooperation Council member state or charged with violation of any law or regulation thereof;
5. I agree to depart the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on or before the expiration date of my visa. I am well aware that any violation of the laws and regulations of the Kingdom or any engagement in prohibited activities, such as the activities mentioned herein or in the entry visa documentation are subject to the penalties described in the "Dealing with Persons on Entry Visas" statute, as enacted by Royal Decree No. 42, dated 10/18/1404 H;
6. I acknowledge and reaffirm my declaration that this application and the evidence submitted with it are all true and correct. I also understand that if I submit any false information or if my name was found to be listed as banned from entry into the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, my application will be denied or my visa, if already granted, revoked. Moreover, I may be turned back from any Saudi port of entry at my own expense, while I shall have no right to demand compensation.

**Name (Please print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 – Saudi HEI Handbook

Saudi HEI Handbook on cultural awareness for western women ELF teachers working in KSA

<b>uniservices</b>	
<b>A Guide to Saudi Arabia</b>	
<b>Contents</b>	
Introduction.....	5
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Facts*.....	6
A little History of Saudi Arabia.....	7
How did Saudi Arabia get its Name?*.....	8
Saudi Arabia's Constitution.....	8
Religion.....	9
Prayer Times.....	9
Muttawwa or Religious Police.....	9
Ramadan - the holy month of fasting and prayer*.....	10
Safety and Security*.....	11
Saudi Legal System.....	11
Murder and Sexual Immorality.....	11
Debt.....	11
Vehicle Insurance.....	11
Alcohol.....	11
Drugs.....	11
The Saudi Way of Life.....	12
Gender Segregation.....	12
People*.....	12
Time*.....	12
Climate*.....	12
The Arabic Calendar*.....	13
Months/Days of the Week*.....	13
Restrictions on Women in Public Places.....	14
Language*.....	14
Local Customs and Rules.....	16
Some Saudi Customs: Dos and Don'ts.....	16
Discrimination.....	17
What to Wear in Saudi Arabia?.....	18
Traditional Saudi Dress/Clothing*.....	18
Electricity*.....	19
Photography.....	19
Finances*.....	19
Income Tax*.....	19
Currency*.....	19
Exchange Rates*.....	19
Repatriation of Funds*.....	19
Tipping*.....	19
Transport.....	20
Health*.....	21
Hospitals and Doctors*.....	21
Pharmacies*.....	21
Optical Care*.....	21
Dental Care*.....	21
Feminine Hygiene*.....	22
Family Planning Facilities*.....	22
Hairdressing*.....	22
Beauty Salons*.....	22
Food*.....	22
Supermarkets*.....	22
Eating Out.....	22
Restaurants/Cafes.....	23
Restaurants*.....	23
Cost of Living*.....	23
Shopping*.....	24
Clothes Shopping*.....	25

Entertainment*	26
Sports*	26
Communication	27
Postal Facilities*	27
Couriers*	27
Mobile Phones*	27
Internet	27
Business Etiquette*	28
Business and Trading Hours*	28
Business during Ramadan*	28
Travel to Saudi Arabia	28
Excursions*	30
Miswak -- the Natural Toothbrush*	31
Miscellaneous*	32
Appliances*	32
Suggested Reading*	32
Additional Information*	33
Frequently Asked Questions*	34
Acknowledgments*	37

\*irrelevant to chapter one--entire section omitted from Appendix 4

(...) abbreviated for relevance to chapter one

## Introduction

This guide is intended to provide you with some basic practical information about what to expect from life in Saudi Arabia. We hope that you will find it useful and that it will give you an insight into some of the hidden treasures that the Kingdom holds. The information contained is up-to-date at the time of writing but is subject to change. As with living in any foreign country, being open minded is the key to your adjustment. Having a good basic knowledge of the Kingdom in advance will lessen any culture shock and once you are settled, make everyday life not only easier but more pleasant and enjoyable (...)

## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Facts\*

### A little History of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is known as the birthplace of Islam. Islam obliges all Muslims to make the Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, at least once during their lifetime if they are able to do so. The country adheres to a strict interpretation of Islamic religious law (Shari'a). Men and women are not permitted to attend public events together and are segregated in the work place. (...) Most Saudis are ethnically Arab. Some are of mixed ethnic origin and are descended from Turks, Iranians, Indonesians, Indians, Africans, and others, most of who immigrated as pilgrims and reside in the Hijaz region along the Red Sea coast. Many Arabs from nearby countries are employed in the Kingdom. There are also a significant numbers of expatriate workers from around the world. The Saudi state began in central Arabia in about 1750. A local ruler, Muhammad bin Saud, joined forces with an Islamic reformer, Muhammad Abd Al-Wahhab, to create a new political entity. Over the next 150 years, the fortunes of the Saud family rose and fell several times as Saudi rulers contended with Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and other Arabian families for control on the peninsula. The modern Saudi state was founded by the late King Abdul Aziz Al-Saud (known internationally as Ibn Saud). In 1902, Abdul Aziz recaptured Riyadh, the Al-Saud dynasty's ancestral capital, from the rival Al-Rashid family. Continuing his conquests, Abdul Aziz subdued Al-Hasa, the rest of Nejd, and the Hijaz between 1913 and 1926. In 1932, these regions were unified as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (...) Saudi forces did not participate in the Six-Day (Arab-Israeli) War of June 1967, but the government later provided annual subsidies to Egypt, Jordan, and Syria to support their economies. During the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Saudi Arabia participated in the Arab oil boycott of the United States and Netherlands. A member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Saudi Arabia had joined other member countries in moderate oil price increases beginning in 1971. After the 1973 war, the price of oil rose substantially, dramatically increasing Saudi Arabia's wealth and political influence. (...) King Fahd played a major part in bringing about the August 1988 cease-fire between Iraq and Iran and in organizing and strengthening the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a group of six Arabian Gulf states dedicated to fostering regional economic cooperation and peaceful development. (GCC = KSA, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE) (...)

### How did Saudi Arabia get its Name?\*

#### Saudi Arabia's Constitution

The Government has declared the Islamic holy book the Koran (also known as the Quran), and the Sunna (tradition) of the Prophet Muhammad, to be the country's Constitution. The Government bases its legitimacy on governance according to the precepts of a rigorously conservative form of Islam (Shariah). Neither the Government nor society in general accepts the concept of separation of religion and state. Islamic practice generally is limited to that of the Wahabi order, which adheres to the Hanbali school of the Sunni branch of Islam as interpreted by Muhammad Ibn Abd Al-Wahab, an 18th century religious reformer. Practices contrary to this interpretation, such as visits to the tombs of renowned Muslims, are discouraged. The Shi'a Muslim minority (roughly 800,000 of nearly 14 million citizens) lives mostly in the Eastern Province, where it constitutes about one-third of the population. Approximately 6 million foreigners live throughout the country. These foreigners include Muslims of different denominations, Christians of different denominations, Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, agnostics, and atheists. However, no religion, other than Islam, is recognised with Saudi Arabia. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs directly supervises, and is a major source of funds for, the construction and maintenance of almost all mosques in the country. The Ministry pays the salaries of imams (prayer leaders) and others who work in the mosques. A governmental committee is responsible for defining the qualifications of imams. The Government monitors mosques to prevent the raising of politically and religiously sensitive subjects during sermons.

#### Religion

Islam is the official religion of all GCC Countries, including Saudi Arabia. The basis of Islam is the belief that there is only one God and that Prophet Muhammad is his messenger. There are five pillars of Islam which all Muslims must follow: the Profession of Faith,

Prayer, Charity, Fasting and Pilgrimage. Saudi Arabia is the home of Islam, and of the two holiest sites in Islam: Mecca (more commonly spelt as Makkah) and Medina (Madinah). Saudi is proud of its heritage, and the religious influence it has had through generations. Religion continues to have a great impact on the country and the culture as we know it today. The official title of the Saudi King is indeed 'Custodian of the Two Mosques'. What makes Saudi society so unique is the way that its sense of duty in protecting these two sites from immoral or irreligious activities in the area around the mosques (ie the whole country) is carried through into the activities of everyday life. Millions of Muslims visit Saudi each year. Muslims are expected to pray 5 times a day, at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening (the prayer times can be found in the daily newspapers). It is a major expression of faith for every Muslim to make the pilgrimage to (Hajj) to the shrine (Ka'aba) and other religious sites at Mecca once in his/her lifetime. The Muslim holy day is Friday. Saudi Arabia is an exclusively Islamic (Muslim) kingdom and Islam governs nearly every aspect of life. The public practice of any form of religion other than Islam is prohibited in Saudi Arabia. Severe punishment (imprisonment and deportation) can result should such activities come to the attention of the authorities. The authorities also stamp firmly on attempts at proselytisation or conversion of Muslims to Christianity. (However, non-Muslims are free to worship in their own homes.) Entry to Mecca and Medina (the two holiest cities of Islam) is strictly forbidden to all non-Muslims though access to the outskirts of Medina (e.g. the Sheraton Hotel) is allowed.

#### **Prayer Times**

(...) When the mullahs give the prayer call everything closes – if you are in a store or restaurant you may be allowed to continue but it is unlikely you will be served until prayer is finished. It is useful to carry a prayer schedule with you.

#### **Mutawa or Religious Police**

Religious police, or Mutawa, make up the Committee to Promote Virtue and Prevent Vice, which receives its funding from the Government. The President of the Mutawa holds the rank of cabinet minister.

The Mutawa have the authority to detain persons for no more than 24 hours for violation of strict standards of proper dress and behaviour. However, they sometimes exceed this limit before delivering detainees to the police. Current procedures require a police officer to accompany the Mutawa at the time of an arrest. The Government requires the Mutawa to follow established procedures and to offer instruction in a polite manner. Mutawa enforcement of strict standards of social behaviour include the closing of commercial establishments during the five daily prayer observances, insisting upon compliance with strict norms of public dress, and dispersing gatherings of women in public places. Mutawa frequently reproach Saudi and foreign women for failure to observe strict dress codes, and arrested men and women found together who were not married or closely related.

#### **Ramadan - the holy month of fasting and prayer\***

#### **Safety and Security\***

#### **Saudi Legal System**

It is strongly encouraged that you get to know the difference between laws applicable in your country and Saudi law and to abide by the laws of Saudi Arabia while you are there. You will find that Saudi laws and moral standards are considerably stricter than those of most western countries and that in certain cases, notably involving dress, drink and moral behaviour, what is not a crime in your country is treated as a crime in Saudi Arabia. Laws are based on the Muslim Holy Book, the Quran. The system is often known as "sharia". Punishments for some offences are harsh by western standards. But the Saudis understand that the ways of non-Muslims are different from their own and they will not generally interfere with what foreigners do quietly, privately and discreetly. But foreigners who take advantage of this to break the law are running serious risks.

#### **Murder and Sexual Immorality**

Murder and sexual immorality such as adultery or homosexual acts carry the death penalty in Saudi Arabia. So does apostasy (renunciation of the Muslim faith) or discussing the existence of God. The death penalty is carried out in public, usually by beheading. Serious and/or persistent theft is punished by cutting of the thief's right hand. This, too, is done in public, usually in front of the main Mosque after mid-day prayers on Friday.

#### **Debt**

Under sharia law, non-payment of debt is considered a crime, and sufficient reason for imprisonment; imprisonment does not discharge the debt. It is therefore important both to avoid getting into debt personally and to keep careful accounts of any employer's funds or goods, which pass through your hands. You can be held personally responsible for company debts, too, if you are considered the sole company representative in Saudi Arabia. Experience shows that debt cases are often the most difficult to resolve.

#### **Vehicle Insurance**

Vehicle insurance, including third party cover, is available in Saudi Arabia and is compulsory; it costs 10% of the insured value of the car and must be paid before the owner takes possession. Whilst women cannot drive they are allowed to purchase a vehicle and employ a driver (and there are expat women in Riyadh who own a car and employ a driver). An expatriate should not assume that he is covered for third party claims even when he is driving his employer's vehicle on business: he should check that he is adequately covered.

#### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is illegal in Saudi Arabia. Sentences for alcohol offences range from a few weeks or months imprisonment for consumption to several years for smuggling, manufacturing or distributing alcohol. Lashes can also be part of the sentence; and a hefty Customs fine if smuggled alcohol is involved. The authorities also hand out stiff penalties to people found in possession of equipment for making alcohol.

#### **Drugs**

The Saudis take a particularly serious view of drug offences. The death penalty is frequently imposed on drug smugglers, including foreigners, and sometimes also on minor traffickers found guilty on a second or subsequent charge. Possession of even the smallest quantity can lead to a 2-year prison sentence. Imprisonment in Saudi Arabia is a trying and uncomfortable experience; its purpose is punishment, not rehabilitation. Prisons are generally overcrowded and, for much of the year, hot. Exercise, if any, is an occasional privilege. Visits are allowed regularly, though under difficult conditions.

#### **The Saudi Way of Life**

The Saudis are friendly and hospitable people however work and social life are strictly divided by sex. Outside the family circle the sexes do not mix at all. Most Saudi women cover their faces in public. It is illegal for women to drive. Saudis will not generally be offended by a social mistake stemming from ignorance. But they still set great store by personal contact and value, much more than we do, the exchange of small favours in their everyday affairs. Until coffee or tea is poured, no business is discussed at all. Undue haste to get down to business is taken as a sign of bad manners and ineptitude. The family is the all important social unit. Arranged



marriages are still common. Never ask after a Saudi's wife although an inquiry about their family is acceptable. They may, however, ask after yours, because they know that it is acceptable to do so in the West. The extended family system is very much in operation, and relatives remain in close touch with each other. A woman leaving the immediate family circle will be veiled and must not be alone with a man other than her husband or a close relative. Traditionally men and women do not mix in public, but nowadays they are often invited to dine together. Women are not allowed to drive cars in Saudi Arabia. Women should keep their knees and elbows covered. All women, including Western women, must wear the long black abaya and carry a headscarf with them when in public i.e. outside the family home.

#### **Gender Segregation**

This is the main difference between life in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. All activities outside of the home are divided by gender e.g. most offices and restaurants have separate areas for men and women.

#### **People\***

#### **Time\***

#### **Climate\***

#### **The Arabic Calendar**

Officially, Saudi Arabia uses the Islamic, or Hijra, calendar. Islamic dates are calculated from the year that the prophet Mohammed migrated (hijra) from Makkah to Medina in the year 622 AD. The Western method of designating Islamic dates is referred to in Saudi Arabia as A.H. (Anno Hegirae). For example, the year

1996 AD corresponds roughly to 1417 A.H. (...) Muslims follow a lunar calendar of 12 months, which is 10 or 11 days shorter than the Gregorian (solar) calendar. The ninth month of the Muslim year is Ramadan, when no Muslim must allow anything to pass between his/her lips between sunrise and sunset. No-one should eat, drink or smoke in public during the fasting hours and strict penalties, including deportation, can be incurred if caught.

The two major public holidays of the year are religious festivals. Eid al-Fitr which lasts for about two weeks and celebrates the end of Ramadan. The Eid al-Adha, about two months later, lasts for about 10 days and celebrates the sacrifice during the pilgrimage to Mecca. (Christmas is not recognised in Saudi Arabia and most expatriates are expected to work on Christmas Day).

#### **Restrictions on Women in Public Places**

Women are not permitted to appear in public with a male unless he is a close family member (father, brother, husband, son) or a driver. These rules apply even in hotel restaurants. Except in big hotels, there are specially designated areas for women and families in restaurants and food halls. Some music shops are off limits to women. There are separate queues for women in banks. The importuning of women by Saudi men is not uncommon. Even when wearing an *abaya* (loose fitting outer black garment, which is mandatory for women in public) over one's clothing, this does not stop the stares or touching. Such harassment, unpleasant and offensive as it is, is unlikely to be translated into serious physical assaults. Women are not allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia (see Driving) but can do so in the other Gulf countries. Women should not smoke cigarettes in public places

#### **Language\***

#### **Local Customs and Rules**

It should come as no surprise to expats that Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country where Islamic law is strictly enforced. You cannot bring in alcohol nor pork products, and religious books and artifacts are only approved in quantities that negotiate personal use not proselytising efforts. Expats should dress conservatively at all times, and western women must cover their hair, legs and arms. Additionally, religious paraphernalia cannot be worn in public places - including objects devoted to the Islamic religion. Homosexual behaviour and adultery are highly illegal and can carry the death penalty if associated with a base crime like rape. While anything other than heterosexuality is highly deprecated by Saudi custom and law, it is not automatically punished; flagrant behaviour does very much draw "unwanted attention", however. Use your right hand when eating and giving and receiving of things - the left hand is considered ritually unclean. Under Saudi law it is illegal to hold two passports; if discovered a second passport will be confiscated by immigration authorities. Adapting to life in the Kingdom and minimising culture shock are the largest challenges expats face.

#### **Some Saudi Customs: Dos and Don'ts**

##### **You should**

- show an interest in learning something about Saudi life and culture
- avoid showing the soles of your feet in company; this is considered extremely rude
- remember that friendly incidental chatting with males from any nationality may be misinterpreted as something more than chatting

##### **You should NOT**

- extol the virtues of your own religion or your country's political system
- criticise the Saudi system of government or any aspect of Islam
- attempt to distribute any religious or political tracts
- if you are male, approach a Saudi woman (or any female stranger) under any circumstances
- if you are female, approach Saudi men, as this may be severely misinterpreted
- if you are male, ask a Saudi man about the female members of his family, as this is seen as a serious invasion of privacy. You can ask, 'How's your family?' but that's all
- if you are female, expose more than ankles, wrists and face from the neck up in public
- even if married, show any overt signs of affection towards your spouse in public
- eat (including chewing gum), drink or smoke in public during the fasting periods of the holy month of Ramadan
- take photos of military or government buildings

For more information please go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/A486191>

#### **Discrimination**

Like all societies there is discrimination within Saudi Arabia. It tends to be gender and race based. It is well known that there is less freedom and some restrictions for women living in Saudi Arabia such as driving, dress and mixing with non-related males in the main (see below and other sections within this Guide). It has been reported discrimination can be based on nationality and colour and this can also be reflected in salary packages paid to some nationalities.

#### **What to Wear in Saudi Arabia**

The religion and customs of Saudi Arabia dictate conservative dress for both men and women. Foreigners are given some leeway in the matter of dress, but they are expected to follow local customs, particularly in public places. As a general rule, foreign men should wear long trousers and shirts that cover the upper torso. Men should not wear shorts except at the beach. Foreign women should wear loose fitting skirts with hemlines well below the knee. Sleeves should be at least elbow length and the neckline above the collarbone; trousers may attract unwanted attention. Women must wear the abaya when in public – there are no exceptions to this. The only time most expats can go without the abaya is when they are guests at a western embassy but this is also subject to who is hosting the function – at many western embassy functions some women leave the abaya with the cloakroom attendant and wear an after five styled dress they would wear at a similar function at home. However, regardless of the occasion there will be Saudis present and, therefore, as a mark of respect to the host nation conservative dress should be worn. The best fashion guideline is "conceal rather than reveal".

#### **Traditional Saudi Dress/Clothing\***

#### **Electricity\***

#### **Photography**

Strictly speaking, photography is not permitted in Saudi Arabia. However, cameras and photographic shops are common and, in practice, you should simply be careful not to photograph anyone without his or her permission; or any building, installation or other place which might offend local sensitivities about security (construed very widely) or privacy. Photos of the countryside and scenery itself can be taken, but please do so discreetly, and avoid people wherever possible.

#### **Finances\***

##### **Transport**

#### **Travelling for Women**

Women are forbidden to drive or cycle on public roads in Saudi. All women need to travel accompanied by their husband or a male family member. Alternatively, a female can order a taxi, but it must be from a taxi firm that is designated for female use.

#### **Driving and Taxis**

Women are not permitted to drive by law, however, taxis are numerous and affordable. Women should only ever sit in the back seat of a taxi. Many women contract a driver whilst in the Kingdom to make getting around easier. Traffic in the city is incredibly busy and road laws/signposts are confusing at best. Mortality rates from traffic accidents are very high in the Kingdom and we would urge you to consider your personal safety first and foremost.

#### **Public Transport**

Public transport for women doesn't really exist in Riyadh. There are orange and yellow service taxis, which are a kind of mini-bus, which are cheap but not a comfortable way to travel. They are probably best avoided, especially if you are female. There are many reputable "limousine" companies that can be hired as well.

#### **Taxis/Limousines\***

#### **Health\***

#### **Food\***

#### **Eating Out\***

riyals per head depending on the dining scale ie low end being at an eating hall and top end being the Globe or the Four Seasons. It should be noted that due to the culture of the Muslim world there are different areas within the restaurants, cafes and eating halls – Men only or Family (where women and male relatives sit) sections. If it is men only women cannot stay there. Women still need to wear an Abaya.

#### **Restaurants/Cafes**

The restaurants are divided into two sections: one for families and one for single men (men without their family or bachelor s). Groups of single men are not permitted to eat in the family section of restaurants. Women travelling alone, with other females or with their families, are expected to eat in the family section which is usually screened off from the rest of the restaurant. Do not sit or attempt to sit in the single section.

#### **Cost of Living\***

#### **Shopping\***

#### **Clothes Shopping**

With the exception of the female only mall/floors of malls it is not possible to try clothing on in stores (Kingdom Mall is one that has a floor dedicated for women only – there are changing rooms and you can remove your abaya if you wish). The usual practice is for a purchase to be made, take it home try it on and if it is not suitable or you change your mind to take it back to the store for a refund (you will need to retain your receipt) – do not remove the tags until you are sure you are keeping the items. You should check the receipt for the timeframe allowable to do this – most shops will have one.

(sections omitted)

#### **Entertainment\***

#### **Sports\***

#### **Communication**

(...) With regards to the internet it should be noted all traffic is monitored and scanned by the Saudi Authorities and various websites etc cannot be accessed some of which are for obvious reasons but others can seem bizarre.

#### **Business Etiquette\***

#### **Business and Trading Hours**

(...) Some businesses will have female only sections, sometimes this is a different area accessed through the main door and sometimes a separate door labelled females.

#### **Business during Ramadan\***

#### **Travel to Saudi Arabia**

All expats (foreign workers) need a visa when entering Saudi Arabia, and visas are only granted to those who have been sponsored to enter the kingdom. Separate criteria for work visas apply. Even tourist visas are hard to come by and are granted to selected groups on a restricted basis. All entering Saudi must have a valid passport with a minimum of six months validity plus the relevant visa and a return ticket. Women cannot enter the Kingdom alone unless being met by a sponsor or male relative; they must also have confirmed and verified accommodation for the period of their stay. Certain food produce and materials are strictly forbidden when entering Saudi Arabia. You must not try to import any narcotics, alcohol, pork products, religious books including the Bible and material, obscene literature or videos or literature containing pictures of scantily dressed women, pornography (on DVD or

photographic images). Individuals are, however, allowed to bring in one bible for private home use only. Everyday pharmaceutical products may well be on the prescribed list of drugs and travellers carrying them even in good faith are liable to detention. If you have prescription medicine it is suggested you obtain a letter from your GP to carry with you on entry into Saudi although many of the items that are prescription only in NZ are freely available over the counter without a prescription (...)

**Excursions\***

**Miswak -- the Natural Toothbrush\***

**Miscellaneous\***

**Suggested Reading\***

**Additional Information**

Further information can be found on the following websites which are updated regularly:

<http://www.scta.gov.sa/en/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.riyadh.com/eng/>

<http://www.riyadh.gov.sa/en/Pages/Home.aspx>

**Frequently Asked Questions\***

(sections omitted)

## Appendix 4 – Saudi HEI Teacher Etiquette Form

### Points of etiquette

Many matters of etiquette in Saudi Arabia are connected to Islam as it is written in the Qur'an and how it has been traditionally understood and practiced throughout the centuries. Prescribed Islamic etiquette is referred to as "Adab", and described as "refinement, good manners, morals, ethics, decorum, decency, humaneness and righteousness". Visitors of Saudi Arabia are required to respect these local conventions.

### Islam

Islam is the official religion of Saudi Arabia. It is based on five pillars: Profession of faith, Prayer, Fasting, Charity and Pilgrimage.

Muslims pray five times a day: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and night. Muslims may pray in public places. In the workplace, a room or space is usually designated for prayer.

Muslims observe a full month of fasting and festivities, called *Ramadan*. During Ramadan, Muslims abstain from eating, drinking and smoking between sunrise and sunset. During Ramadan, please refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in public or in front of staff or business associates. It is also acceptable to extend the traditional greetings of Ramadan, "Ramadan Mubaarak" ("Blessed Ramadan"). During Ramadan, families and friends break their fasts together at a huge meal called *iftar*. If invited, it is a welcome idea to accept an invitation to *iftar*. It is a wonderful experience and great introduction to family life in the Saudi Arabia.

### Handshaking

Men shake hands. Women should wait until the man extends his hand. Pious Muslim men may not shake hands with women. Pious Muslim women do not shake the hands or touch men who are not in their families. Rather, they might simply put their hand over their hearts to show their sincerity in welcoming the visitor.

### Greeting

When people in Saudi Arabia greet each other, they say "Salam alaykum" ("Peace be upon you"), to which the reply is "Wa alaykum as-salam" ("And upon you be peace"). Middle Easterners often greet each other with a number of ritual phrases and fixed responses. A casual exchange might include an inquiry about a person's family, children, and health. These quick-fire conversations are ended when one or both parties says "Alhamdulillah" which basically means "praise God".

Cheek kissing in the Arab world is relatively common, between friends and relatives. Cheek kissing between males is very common. However, cheek kissing between a male and female is considered inappropriate, unless within the same family, meaning close relatives and not extended family; e.g. brother and sister, or if they are a married couple. Women normally exchange kisses on alternate cheeks, usually three times.

### Hospitality / Eating

Hospitality is held in high regard throughout Saudi Arabia and Saudis take great pride in shows of hospitality, never failing to at least serve tea, coffee and a snack such as dates. A gracious guest will accept the gesture.

The act of communal eating is a highly recognized outward expression of friendship in the Middle East. If you attend such an event, do not eat with your left hand, which is considered unclean. Also, in many places, it is considered polite to leave a bit of food on one's plate.

In some areas in the Middle East, it is common for people to take their food from a common plate in the center of the table. Rather than employing forks or spoons, people may scoop up hummus and other foodstuff with Arabic bread.

### Etiquette

Displaying the sole of one's foot or touching somebody with one's shoe is often considered rude. This includes sitting with one's feet or foot elevated. In some circumstances, shoes should be removed before entering a living room.

Responding to anger or seriousness with light laughter or a smile is common. This must not be seen as an indication that the other person is not taking you or the situation seriously.

Positioning yourself so your back is not facing another person is customary. If a person's back is facing another person, he or she should excuse himself or herself.

### Dress Code

Women, be they local or foreign, are all required to wear an Abaya. While a headscarf is optional for non-Muslim females, one should at least be brought along (especially when visiting a mosque) in order to respect the tradition. Men should not wear "short" shorts in public. What is meant by this is above the knee.

### Photography

Do not take photos in mosques or at military installations. If you would like to take a photo of a person, especially a woman, ask permission first.

### Drugs and Alcohol

Please note that there is a zero tolerance towards drugs and alcohol in Saudi Arabia.



## Appendix 5 – Saudi HEI Teacher Agreement Form

1. I will do my best to arrive to scheduled classes On-Time and be prepared to teach with all required program class materials.
2. I will do my best to be a good role model and example to my students, other faculty members, PNU staff and all those around me.
3. I will conduct myself and dress professionally at all times and honor the conservative traditions of the Saudi culture.
4. I will be respectful at all times to my students, other faculty members and the management team.
5. I will proactively participate in University activities and events that contribute to the ongoing growth and development of the students and their overall academic experience.
6. I will be conscientious and not engage in gossip or the spreading of rumors.
7. I will be conscious of the classroom topics of discussion and never discuss topics that focus on politics, religion, sexual relationships, alcohol or drugs.
8. I will discourage discussions that may lead to students engaging in protests or related propaganda.
9. I will proactively maintain and enhance my teaching skills to keep up-to-date and always provide an education that is of high standards and performance.
10. I will read, comply with and follow all University policies and procedures as described in the Faculty Handbook.
11. I will proactively BE and DO my best in everything I do.

I agree to have read and understood all the expectations outlined here in the Teacher Code of Conduct Agreement.

---

Teacher's Name

---

Teacher's Signature

## Appendix 6 – Informed consent for Cohort 1

### HREC FORM 1:

#### Consent forms for cohort one: western women EFL teachers

##### Informed Consent to Participate in Research - Purpose of the study

The researcher is Tamsin Waterkeyn, who is conducting educational research for her doctoral studies, exploring: Education and Globalisation: research into women learning and teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

##### Why are you being asked to take part?

You have been selected to take part in this research study because you have had valid insightful experience of teaching Saudi females. The extent of your professional and personal experience may contribute to understanding language teaching in this setting better. Secondly, you are no longer actively teaching in KSA, only teachers who have finished teaching are selected. With narrative inquiry you describe own account from a retrospective standpoint, which is immensely valuable to educational research, in order to improve English language teaching in culturally diverse placements, such as Saudi Arabia.

##### What will happen during this study?

You are committing to one narrative description of your experience of living and teaching English in Saudi Arabia. We will provide a framework, to focus your writing. Please use the framework as you write, but feel free to extend from the narrative frame. You are expected to write a description only once. Please write a minimum of 2500 words. When you have completed the three segments (before, during, after), we may record an interview about certain aspects.

##### Anonymity & Confidentiality:

You will be anonymous in the study and identifiable aspects (institution, previous employer, address, surname, documentation) will be omitted. Your narratives will not be shared with others, published, read or used in other contexts outside this research.

##### Benefits

The main potential benefit of participating in qualitative research, is exploring your own experience and analysing aspects that have taught you something of significance. This insight is validated through educational research, that could have a positive effect on learners and teachers in this setting.

##### Risks or Discomfort

This research is considered to have no foreseen psychological or physical risks.

##### Compensation

Due to ethical requirements, you cannot be given any form of compensation for your time. The only compensation would be if findings from this research are of educational value.

##### Authorization to Use and Disclose Protected Information

##### How will my information be used?

By signing this form, you are giving your permission to use and/or share the data collected as described in this document. Your authorization to use your information will not expire unless you revoke it in writing. You can list any particular information that you do not want us to use or share in the space below. If you list nothing here, we can use and share all of the data listed above for this research but for nothing other than that described.

For the Research Participant (you) to complete:

☐ I am asking Open University and the researcher not to include, use, or share the following information in this research (if blank, then no information will be excluded):

---

### How Do I Withdraw Permission to Use My Information?

By sending an email clearly stating that you wish to withdraw your authorization to use of your participation in the research: please write to: \*\*\*\*\*@xx.xx.ac

If you decide to withdraw from research, you must send the withdrawal email before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016. As Tamsin Waterkeyn is conducting the research study for doctoral study, she cannot let you see or copy the research until publicly acknowledged as a valid thesis. She may publish what she has learnt from this study. If she does, she will not include your name. She will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

Contact the researcher:

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Researcher:

Tamsin Waterkeyn +44\*\*\*\*\*  
Supervisor: Dr \*\*\*\*\* +44\*\*\*\*\*

### Consent to Take Part in Research

*If you want to take part, please read the statements below and sign the form if the statements are true. I freely give my consent to take part in this study and authorize that my information as agreed above, be collected/disclosed in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent and Research Authorization:

*I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what she can expect from their participation. I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, she understands:*

- *What the study is about*
- *What methodology will be used*
- *What the potential benefits might be*
- *What the known risks might be*

*I can confirm that This research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in the appropriate language. Additionally, this subject reads well enough to understand this document. The participant is able to give informed consent, and is over the age of 18, so does not require a guardian (Signature of Person Taking Part in Study).*

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 7 – Informed consent for Cohort 2a+b

### HREC FORM 2:

#### **Informed consent form cohort two: Saudi women EFL learners**

**Informed Consent to Participate in Research** -Information to consider carefully before taking part in research study Purpose of the study. The researcher is Tamsin Waterkeyn, who is conducting educational research for her doctoral studies, exploring: Education and Globalisation: research into women learning and teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

#### **Why are you being asked to take part?**

You are being asked to take part in this research study because firstly, you have valid insightful experience of learning English in Saudi Arabia. Your personal experience may contribute to understanding how Saudi learners feel about learning with foreign teachers and how they perceive English in the broader context of globalisation.

#### **What will happen during this study?**

You will be invited to one qualitative interview or emailed one narrative inquiry frame to complete, as specified by the researcher. I will ask you describe your perspective of English, your language learning experience and globalisation.

#### **Audio-recordings:**

If the interview takes place, it will be recorded with a portable digital recorder/ through WebEx (a program which allows us to record the interview and you will receive your own recording at the end), as specified by the researcher. This means that you can listen and consent to using the recording once the interview is completed. There is a period of withdrawal, three days after the recording, to allow you to review the recording and decide if you are willing to let it be used for research. The recording will be maintained for the academic duration of the doctorate, until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020. Whereby such files will be deleted.

The Audio-recordings will happen during interviews without video.

#### **Anonymity & Confidentiality:**

You do not have to participate in this research study.

You will be anonymous; your name will not be used.

No identifiable aspect (institution, address, surname, photo, documents) will be included in the research, your recording will be coded to protect anonymity. Your interview will be arranged in a private place where you are comfortable at your convenience. At any time if you are uncomfortable you can stop participating in the research.

#### **Benefits**

The main benefit of participating in qualitative research, is exploring your own experience and perspective: your voice. Your insight is validated through educational research. Research could have a positive effect on other learners and teachers in this setting.

#### **Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to have no foreseen psychological or physical risks. As you can stop participating in research if you choose and your participation is completely confidential.

#### **Total Number of Participants**

Approximately 12 individuals will take part in this study.

#### **Compensation**

Due to ethical requirements, you cannot be given any form of compensation for your time.

The only compensation would be if findings from this research are of educational value.

#### **Authorisation to Use and Disclose Protected Information**

#### **How will my information be used?**

*By signing this form, you are giving your permission to use and/or share your information as described in this document for any and all study/research related*

*purposes. Your authorization to use your information will not expire unless you revoke it in writing. You can list any particular information that you do not want us to use or share in the space below. If you list nothing here, we can use and share all of the information listed above for this research but for nothing else.*

For the Research Participant (you) to complete:

☐ I am asking Open University and the researcher not to include, use, or share the following information in this research (if blank, then no information will be excluded):

---

#### **How Do I Withdraw Permission to Use My Information?**

By sending an email clearly stating that you wish to withdraw your authorization to use of your participation in the research: please write to: \*\*\*\*\*@xx.xx.ac

If you decide to withdraw from research, you must send the withdrawal email before 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016. As Tamsin Waterkeyn is conducting the research study for doctoral study, she cannot let you see or copy the research until publicly acknowledged as a valid thesis. She may publish what she has learnt from this study. If she does, she will not include your name. She will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

Contact the researcher:

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, call Researcher:

Tamsin Waterkeyn +44\*\*\*\*\*  
Supervisor: Dr \*\*\*\*\* +44\*\*\*\*\*

#### **Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent and Research Authorization**

*I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what she can expect from their participation. I hereby certify that when this person signs this form, to the best of my knowledge, she understands:*

- *What the study is about*
- *What methodology will be used*
- *What the potential benefits might be*
- *What the known risks might be*

*I can confirm that This research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in the appropriate language. Additionally, this subject reads well enough to understand this document. The participant is able to give informed consent, and is over the age of 18, so does not require a guardian (Signature of Person Taking Part in Study).*

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 8 – Ethical Clearance Letter 1

HREC/2015/1791/Waterkeyn/2 Dec.2014



The Open University

From Dr Duncan Banks  
Deputy Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics  
Committee  
Email duncan.banks@open.ac.uk  
Extension 59198  
To Tamsin Waterkeyn, CREET  
Subject *"Education and Globalisation: Socio-cultural Linguistic  
Research into women teaching and learning English in Saudi  
Arabia."*  
HREC Ref HREC/2015/1791/Waterkeyn/2  
AMS ref n/a  
Submitted 03 December 2014  
Date 04 December 2014

## Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the **modified** research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a **favourable opinion** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee as it is deemed to be low risk. Please note the following;

1. You are responsible for notifying the HREC immediately of any information received by you, or of which you become aware which would cast doubt on, or alter, any information contained in the original application, or a later amendment which would raise questions about the safety and/or continued conduct of the research.
2. It is essential that any proposed amendments to the research are sent to the HREC for review, so they can be recorded and a favourable opinion given prior to the any changes being implemented (*except only in cases of emergency when the welfare of the participant or researcher is may be effected*).
3. You are authorised to present this memorandum to outside bodies such as NHS Research Ethics Committees in support of any application for future research clearance. Also, where there is an external ethics review, a copy of the application and outcome should be sent to the HREC.
4. OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their frameworks for research ethics.
5. At the conclusion of your project, by the date stated in your application, you are required to provide the Committee with a final report to reflect how the project has progressed, and importantly whether any ethics issues arose and how they were dealt with. A copy of the final report template can be found on the research ethics website - <http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/human-research/human-research-ethics-full-review-process-and-proforma#final> report.

Regards,

Dr Duncan Banks  
Deputy Chair OU HREC

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HREC\_2015-1791-Waterkeyn-2-favourable-opinion



## Appendix 9 – Ethical Clearance Letter 2

HEC/2015/1791/Waterkeyn/1 Feb.2015

The Open University



From Dr Duncan Banks  
Chair, The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee  
Email duncan.banks@open.ac.uk  
Extension 59198

To Tamsin Waterkeyn, CREET

Subject *"Education and Globalisation: Socio-cultural Linguistic Research into women teaching and learning English in Saudi Arabia."*

HREC Ref HREC/2015/1791/Waterkeyn/1

AMS ref

Submitted 04 February 2015

Date 05 February 2015

### Memorandum

This memorandum is to confirm that the research protocol for the above-named research project, as submitted for ethics review, has been given a **favourable opinion** by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee. Please note that the OU research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of grant awarding bodies and their Frameworks for Research Ethics.

Please make sure that any question(s) relating to your application and approval are sent to [Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk](mailto:Research-REC-Review@open.ac.uk) quoting the HREC reference number above. We will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible so that your research is not delayed in any way.

At the conclusion of your project, by the date that you stated in your application, the Committee would like to receive a summary report on the progress of this project, any ethical issues that have arisen and how they have been dealt with.

Regards,

Dr Duncan Banks  
Chair OU HREC

## Appendix 10 – Interview Frame for Cohort 2a

### *Interview questions for Saudi women EFL learners*

#### I. Let's talk about English...

- Have you travelled to any English-speaking countries? /Where would you like to go? Why?
- How do you feel about English as a language?
- Is English as important as your native language, Arabic, for you personally?
- Can you tell me the role is English playing in Saudi Arabia?
- Is English *more than a language* for Saudis?
- "Saudi women should be bilingual in English" do you agree? If so/not, why?
- Do you have fluent English-speaking friends, are they Saudi? How did they learn?
- How do you feel about yourself, now, that you speak English fluently?
- Would people treat you differently in Saudi Arabia if you didn't speak English fluently?
- Do Saudi women have greater influence, as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters if they speak English?
- Can English improve your life in KSA?

Your notes \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Let's talk about Globalisation...

- What does *globalisation* mean for you?
- Some academics say "English is only functional, it does not transmit culture," do you agree?
- Some other academics say English is 'a vehicle' for Western culture, here in Saudi, do you agree?
- Have you ever had Western English teachers?
- Did they influence you positively or negatively?
- Have you ever had Western teachers who spoke about non-Muslim values in classroom discussions?
- Have you ever wanted to ask more about their western perspective? On what, for example?
- Can you remember any interesting stories your English teachers told you about their lifestyles?

Your notes \_\_\_\_\_

#### III. Let's talk about English in an Islamic setting...

- Do you think being in a globalised world can influence you as a Muslim?
- As a Muslim, speaking English can connect you to globalised world... how do you perceive your role in the globalised community?

Your notes \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 11 –Cohort 1: Thematic Analysis Framework

Narrative inquiry frames of Western EFL women teachers

### Identifying Basic themes (Step 2)

*Astride-Stirling (2001)*

<i>Codes:</i> <b>Cohort 1</b>	<i>(Issues discussed)</i> <b>Main topic</b>	<i>(excerpts from narrative frames)</i> <b>Text segments</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>
• Reason for coming to Saudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary</li> <li>- Benefits</li> <li>- Job security</li> <li>- Teaching package</li> <li>- Helping Saudi Women</li> </ul>	"Tax-free" "modern, comforts" "plight of Saudi women" "I hoped I might be of help"	Pre-service motivation [+]
• Logistical constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unspontaneous lifestyle</li> <li>- Certain hardships; frustrations</li> <li>- Lack of ease</li> <li>- Feelings</li> <li>- No women allowed to drive</li> <li>- Problems with transport</li> </ul>	"No spontaneous lifestyle" "trapped" Taxi or driver issues	Logistical constraint [-] Difficulties: transport [-]
• Challenges constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of conveniences</li> <li>- Lack of the joys of good service</li> <li>- Lack of professionalism, planning</li> <li>- Lack of access to international products</li> <li>- Lack of art (Western culture)</li> <li>- Restriction with men in public</li> <li>- Restrictions as single women in public</li> <li>- Lack of male-female interaction</li> </ul>		Frustration in personal life [-]
• Feelings of living in Saudi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Loneliness</li> <li>- Lack of self-expression</li> </ul>		Emotional Struggles [-]
• Teacher Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adapt to KSA</li> </ul>	"Do not group people blindly" "do not put them in boxes" "take some small risks" "take advantage of being in the middle of the world" "never lose patience or calm outwardly" "show respect; ask questions" "enjoy being an observer; reporter [on Saudi Arabia]" "keep an open mind at all times" "importance of intercultural exchange" "constantly revise assumptions"	Open-mindedness [+]
• Positive Teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sense of purpose</li> <li>- Fulfilment</li> </ul>		Meaningful experiences [+]
• Negative Teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inefficiency</li> <li>- Restrictions on teaching</li> <li>- Restrictions on resources</li> <li>- Classroom confrontations</li> <li>- Challenges</li> <li>- Over-worked</li> <li>- Resignations</li> <li>- Unethical educational practices</li> </ul>	"14 resignations from the X program in that semester (mine was the 15th)" "Institution's willingness to alter marks"	Sociocultural [-] Frustration: institution [-]
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid cultural discussion</li> <li>- EFL practice in context</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inappropriate disclosure</li> <li>- No standardization</li> <li>- Disservice to students</li> </ul>		
• Inefficient management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication systems</li> <li>- Lack of technical support</li> <li>- Resources, materials</li> <li>- Unproductive environment</li> <li>- Disorganization</li> </ul>	<p>“Different versions (of instruction to teachers)”</p> <p>“instructions that filtered down to teachers were often unclear”</p> <p>“extremely stressful”</p> <p>“ignorance, lack of training and planning, “laziness”</p> <p>“lack of induction or explanation”</p> <p>“incompetence”</p> <p>“lack of self-confidence”</p>	Frustration: Management [-]
• Top-Down management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative experience with administration</li> <li>- Injustice (Contracts, Pay, Services, etc.)</li> <li>- Management Style:</li> <li>- Teacher-managers were cliquey</li> </ul>	<p>“More anxious to conform rather than query instructions or practices”</p>	
• Unethical Practice	-	<p>“Professionally suspect”</p> <p>“no teacher-manager, however senior, seemed willing to take responsibility”</p> <p>“blaming an unknown or un-named person or committee, often allegedly Saudi”</p> <p>“a mockery of academic rigor”</p> <p>“deadlines for the submission of assignments were routinely moved”</p> <p>“practice sheets for exams turned out to have a very similar content to exam papers”</p>	
• Fear of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Threats</li> <li>- Job insecurity</li> </ul>	<p>“Dictatorial”</p> <p>“militaristic management style”</p> <p>“fear of backlash”</p>	
• Perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjectives used for Saudi:</li> </ul>	<p>“Unknown”</p> <p>“backward nation of religious fiends”</p> <p>“alien”</p> <p>“barbaric”</p>	Pre-service: Participants [-]
• Saudi society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opinions/associations:</li> </ul>	<p>“Patriarchal”</p> <p>“intimidated by the men”</p> <p>“human rights abuses...”</p> <p>“stupendous oil wealth”</p> <p>“demonized in the news”</p> <p>“repression”</p>	Pre-service: Colleagues/teachers [-]
• Perceptions—Saudi Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opinions/associations:</li> </ul>	<p>“Downtrodden”</p> <p>“fear” of the Saudi culture</p> <p>“victims”</p> <p>“be sheltered”</p> <p>“close-minded”</p> <p>“judgmental”</p> <p>“women weren’t allowed to work, or even get educated”</p> <p>“all Muslims hated Christians”</p>	<p>Pre-Service: Friends and family [-]</p> <p>Pre-service: Participants [-]</p>
• Pre-service perceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opinions/associations: Islam</li> </ul>	<p>“Backward culture”</p> <p>“abyss”</p> <p>“Islam = “submission”</p>	
• Pre-service perceptions Saudi Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opinions/associations:</li> </ul>	<p>“Avoid smiling, laughing with opposite sex”</p> <p>“Allowed women to be beaten”</p> <p>“Allowed women to be killed by stoning”</p> <p>“Incapable of real love”</p>	

• Post -service perceptions– Saudi society	- Opinions/associations: - Important sociocultural shifts in perception	“Insight into their country and society”	
• Surprised and proven wrong Saudi Men	- Misconceptions - Good husbands - Good Fathers	“wrong about Saudi men” “helping their women” “caring fathers” “majority of students perceive father as a hero”	
• Post-service perceptions	- Islam for women: Benefit	“Strong discipline” “Strong support system”	Post-service: perceptions [+]
• Post-service	- Saudi society - Saudi women - Misconceptions	“Things are changing” “different culture” “lucky” “women with dreams and desires” “strong family” “fiercely independent and nationalistic” “don’t appreciate westerners criticising their life style and culture” “cosmopolitan attitude” “proud, refined, beautiful, poised” “gracious, measured”	
• Post-service Opinions	- Positive ‘envy’ - New perceptions - Likeness	“I found myself envying the lifestyles” “do not lack materialistically” “nannies look after the children -the housekeeper cleans the house -the maid does all the cooking -the driver is responsible -the husband earns the money -Similarity: “struggle just as much as any other women in the world”	
• Surprised and proven wrong Saudi Women	- Hobbies, interests, talents: - Global identity - Good Life	“Saudi female artists, musicians, writers” “Bookworms, another who’d started writing a book” “Who wrote; sang songs, danced played the guitar” “Spoke French” Financially independent “Started designer abaya companies” Activists “Outspoken about the right for women to drive” “Travelled outside of Saudi” “Immigrate to another country”, “Love Western pop culture and fashion” “Fancy lunches; most expensive restaurants” “Weekly manicures and pedicures” “Shopping for the latest and greatest” “without lifting a finger”	
• Empowerment	- Women’s welfare  - Break Cultural/religious Norms	“Does not take her husband’s last name” “Father support his daughter all her life” “Monetary support”; “even after she is married” “Progressive families” “Been given permission to travel alone” “Get their hands dirty” “Openly declared not wanting to become mothers” “Driver’s licenses in other countries” “Drove the minute they left Saudi” “Planned secret getaways with men” “Having secret extra-marital affairs” “Spoke to (single) men” “Sent photos to men via special phone apps”	

			“Confided wishing to marry a non-Saudi man” “Disclosed being lesbian”	
• Teacher’s	- Reflective practice in adapting		“Meet Arab women” “Engage in society” “Befriend Saudi women” “Attend a Saudi wedding” “Develop a solid support system” “develop a network of Saudi contacts” “expat friends independently of workplace”	Integrate [+]  Social networks [+]  
• Learn about the culture	Learn about the Culture & religion		“learn Arabic” “Learn about the religion” “learn spoken Arabic; Writing system; expressions”	Advice [+]
• Professionalism	- Dress code - Interpersonal interactions		“Don’t be afraid of being stylish/wearing color” “Dress well; on the conservative side” “Be cautious; respectful” “Importance of the human factor” “Interactions and decision-making” “You represent your country, your actions, words”	Professionalism [+]
• Western feminism	- Be cautious		“don’t apply Western feminism”	Euro-centric feminism [-]
• Improvements to teaching practice & management	- Improving management		“Right management” needed “policies were being created as an afterthought”	Policy [+]
• Improving resources	- Improving resources		“Right resources” needed “truly assist these Arab women”	
• Improve practice with teachers	- Involving dialogic Practice with Teachers - Less Authoritarian - Ethical		“Detailing some fundamental shortcomings “teachers questioned the validity of some practice” “why so much money, talent and energy were squandered on a program that failed its students so decisively”	



## Appendix 12 –Cohort 2a Thematic Analysis Framework

Identifying basic themes (Stage A)		<i>Astride-Stirling (2001)</i>
<i>Codes:</i> <i>Cohort 2a</i>	<i>(Issues discussed)</i> <b>Main topic</b>	<i>Basic themes</i>
• Importance of English	- Personal importance - Societal perspectives	Importance of English [+]
• Perception of English	- Generational gaps in English fluency - Adjectives / metaphors of English	Metaphors of English [+]
• Uses of English	- Socializing through English - Academic purposes - English Only HE policy - Professionalism - interacting as a Muslim woman - Outside the classroom	Uses of English [+]
• Social transformation: English	- open-mindedness in Saudi society - Changing societal attitude to English	
• Empowerment of English	- Access to new social platforms - Opportunity vs traditional boundaries - Share identity beyond national borders - Correct misperceptions through intercultural discussion - Intercultural awareness of religion - Sharing cultural values - English increases my social status - English helps me gain respect - provides a sense of self-worth - Fluency in English increases self-confidence - Fluency in English influences Identity - Fluency in English increases professional status for women - English influences gender equality - Female empowerment through English	Positive impact of English [+] Gender related impact [+]
• Exclusion without English	- Discrimination without English - Social isolation without English	Negative impact of English [-]
• Linguistic imperialism	- Attitude of native speakers of English - Attitude of non-English speakers of English	
• Prejudice	- Othering of Saudi Muslim women - Misconceptions Negative impact: Stereotypes - Othering of Western society	Western teachers [-]
• Seeing Globalisation in KSA	- Fashion - Architecture & décor - Cuisine - Entrepreneurs online - Language	Positive impact: Globalisation [+]
• Impacts of Globalisation	- Socializing - Technological integration - Cultural assimilation - Digital practices - Social Media - Increases global citizenship - Integration into global	Negative impact: Globalisation [-]



## Appendix 13 – Cohort 2b: Thematic Analysis Framework

Identifying basic themes (Stage A)		<i>Astride-Stirling (2001)</i>
<b>Codes:</b> <b>Cohort 2b</b>	<b>(Issues discussed)</b> <b>Main topic</b>	<b>Basic themes</b>
Intercultural experiences	Western teachers at university Positive impact: – Teaching style Avoidance of sociocultural exchange in the classroom No western influence (formal learning) Western influence (informal learning) Misconceptions Stereotypes Othering	Western teachers [+]  Negative impact: Western teachers [-]
Importance of English	Personal importance Intercultural importance	Importance of English [+]
learning English	Learning English at University English for Translation Academic importance for HE Professionalism informal learning	Uses of English [+]
Perception of English	Father's perception of English Mother's perception of English Generational gaps in English fluency	Perception of English [+]
Impact of English	English helps me gain respect English increases my social status English increases open-mindedness in Saudi society Changing societal attitude to English Increases global citizenship Integration into global Technological exchange Cultural assimilation Access to new social platforms Opportunity to interact beyond traditional boundaries Share identity beyond national borders Correct misperceptions through intercultural discussion Intercultural awareness of religion Sharing cultural values	Positive impact of English [+]  Global citizenship [+]
• Impact of English	– Exclusion without English	Negative impact of English [+]
Impact of Globalisation	Western women's perceptions: Saudi Muslim women Muslim women's perceptions: Western society Misconceptions of Western Teachers of EFL learners Misconceptions about Saudi Arabia and Saudi women	Othering of Negative impact: Globalisation [+]

• Impact of Globalisation	Religion Digital practices/ Informal learning Socialising	Positive impact: Globalisation [ + ]
Impact of English	Fluency in English increases self-confidence Provides a sense of self-worth Fluency in English influences Identity Fluency in English increases professional status for women	Gender related impact [ + ]



## Appendix 14 – Cohorts 2a + b: Global themes

### STAGE C:

Thematic Analysis Framework to narrative inquiry frames and interview transcripts of Saudi EFL learners

*Astride-Stirling (2001)*

	Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes	
<b>Impacts of English:</b>	1. Personal importance of English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Socially indispensable</li></ul>	<b>Empowerment versus Linguistic imperialism</b>	
<b>Individual</b>	2. Intercultural importance of English			
	3. Perception of Academic English			
	4. Outside the classroom:			
	5. Perceptions of English: Father			
	6. Perception of English: Mother			
	7. Generational gaps with English			
<b>Community</b>	<b>a) Positive perceptions of the impact of English:</b> 1. Gaining respect and increasing social status through English fluency 2. Increasing open-mindedness 3. Changing attitude of KSA Government with regards to English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social status &amp; increase in social influence with English</li><li>• Discrimination &amp; reduced opportunities without English</li><li>• Female empowerment through English</li></ul>		
<b>Saudi society</b>	<b>b) Negative perceptions of the impact of English:</b> 1. Discrimination without English 2. Exclusion without English 3. Attitude of native speakers of English 4. Attitude of non-English speakers of English 5. Linguistic imperialism of English			
	<b>Saudi women</b>			<b>c) Gender related impacts of English fluency for Saudi women</b> 1. Influencing Identity 2. Influencing self-confidence 3. Influencing professional status and sense of self-worth



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing global citizenship</li> <li>Increasing gender equality</li> <li>English as a form of protection</li> <li>Female empowerment through English</li> </ol>		
<b>Practical usage of English:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socialising</li> <li>Academic uses</li> <li>Career</li> <li>Global citizen</li> <li>Digital activity – social networking</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal enrichment through English</li> </ul>	
<b>Globalisation</b> (Tangible impacts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fashion</li> <li>Architecture &amp; décor</li> <li>Cuisine</li> <li>Entrepreneurs online</li> <li>Language</li> <li>Lifestyle</li> <li>Religion</li> <li>Technology &amp; digital practices</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visible effects of globalisation in Saudi society</li> </ul>	<b>Transformation versus Exclusion</b>
<b>Globalisation</b> (Intangible impacts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital practices – digital behaviour &amp; informal learning</li> <li>Integration -global citizenship</li> <li>Informal learning - influences</li> <li>Cultural globalisation: identity -glocal identity</li> <li>Access to Higher University</li> <li>Opportunity – Professional aspirations</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive appraisal of globalisation</li> </ul>	
<b>Western women &amp; society</b>	<b>Learning experiences with Western teachers at university:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching style</li> <li>Avoided sharing about Western cultural</li> <li>Positive exposure to Western culture</li> <li>Misconceptions of Saudi Arabia and Saudi women</li> <li>Likeness</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom socio-cultural misconception</li> </ul>	<b>Likeness versus Othering</b>
<b>Saudi women &amp; society</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share identity beyond national borders</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likeness</li> </ul>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct misperceptions through intercultural discussion</li> <li>Intercultural awareness of religion</li> <li>Sharing cultural values</li> <li>Othering of Saudi Muslim women</li> <li>Othering of Western society</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Othering</li> </ul>	

## Appendix 15 – Cohort 1: Excerpt of data analysis

### Western EFL women teachers' experience in Saudi HEIs

*Coding system: <section no> letter, participant code) e.g. <1. a. T(NP7) >*

#### 1) Private life:

##### a) Prohibition of Driving – Constraints

T(NP7) "As a western woman I felt safe, but slightly frustrated at losing the ability to be spontaneous. Other western teachers told me they felt the same."

T(NP6) "As a western woman living in KSA I felt overwhelmed. I felt that there was no escape. I do not mean escape from KSA but escape from my apartment. I could not simply go outside, jump in my car and drive away. I had to pre-plan my outings and departures. Women are not allowed to drive in KSA, it is forbidden. I was informed on many occasions that women are not allowed to drive because they are emotional creatures, they might in a fit cause an accident. I was told that driving takes a great deal of concentration and a person driving a vehicle must be able to multi-task. Basically, women, for their own protection were not allowed to drive."

##### b) Cultural expectations of Behaviour – Emotional constraint

T(NP5) "I had already had my first culture shock with aspects of Gulf culture while working in Oman, and had learned that becoming upset, blaming or complaining about the problem translates only to its worsening, helping neither to resolve the issue at hand more quickly, nor to improve relations with key people who have influence over your life and well-being, nor to help with future problems, nor to gain a better understanding of the situation from their perspective"

##### c) Adapting to the Lifestyle

T(NP6) "But for me, the main challenge was having to plan everything. Living in Saudi is still a wonderful, challenging experience."

T(NP3) "Before I arrived I thought KSA was going to be less modern (in terms of architecture, technology, and infrastructure) and less Westernized (in terms of restaurants and shops) (...)

T(NP3) "As a western woman, most of the time I felt alone and isolated, a little scared/unsafe, and bored. (...) the main challenge was feeling like I had to hide my true self. I often said while I was there, and I still believe, that I was operating at about 60% of my capacity while living in Saudi. I wasn't my true self. I never felt safe to fully express my opinions, my creativity, my identity. I held a lot of myself back, so that I could better fit in, to avoid getting fired, deported, or arrested (...); I knew basically what I was getting myself into - I knew that living in Saudi would be difficult, but I didn't expect it to have such a lasting negative effect. I felt like a shell of myself most of the time. I was anti-social; I became a hermit and it took several months before I felt normal again.

##### d) Prohibition of Socialising as single men and women – Gender-segregation

T(NP6). The part of living in KSA I found most difficult was not being able to speak to men. Yes, we spoke to men when ordering our food, or driving in their cabs, but we were not allowed to have men friends. Definitely, we met men mostly other expats at different functions, at a local friend's house or at an Embassy party. But it was impossible to meet a male friend for a cup of coffee or a meal. That was a crime punishable by jail time. This actually happened to a good friend of mine

T(NP1) However, other western teachers told me they felt very intimidated by Saudi men. They disliked/disapproved of the way women walked behind the men. They disliked the separation of sexes at restaurants, takeaways and at home. They couldn't stand that women were forbidden to drive and the clothing restrictions.

T(NP5) Arriving as a single, western woman I felt that I was a separate and distinct entity from the rest of society (Saudi women, Saudi men, married foreign women, foreign men, foreign Arabs) but also well-respected. I felt that people need to know certain details of myself and my life, such as my nationality, my age, my marital status, and my job, in order to know how

to relate to me. I felt that I would always be well-respected as long as I was respectful and calm in face of any frustration, problem or emergency.

## **2) Working environment:**

### **a) Emotional frustration – disempowered**

T(NP5) For a Western women's fate to be so completely out of her hands evoked feelings from quiet uneasiness and discomfort to outbursts of anger and indignation and I witnessed and heard about such instances on a regular basis, and was 'tested' regularly as well.

### **b) Emotional frustration – disorganisation**

T(NP5) For me the main challenge was that of organisation. It was always daunting when something was required from the administration office. E.g. Exit visa, final pay or airline tickets. Paper work would get lost or sit on one person's desk unattended or not get forwarded to the appropriate place. There seemed to be no accountability and an awful lot of relying on "Inshallah".

T(NP2) "However the welfare aspect and general organization of people and resources was not unfortunately adequate to cope successfully with the number of staff or students and I am not sure at what level it failed; on the one hand there was no system of welcoming staff, once arrived on campus, and it was only through chance that I knew to be in work at a certain time and on a certain day. Likewise there was a lack of induction or explanation about pay and personnel matters which, when one is in such a far-flung place, was again unsettling (...). Without my family, I certainly felt overwhelmed and unsettled in the first few weeks. These negative and thoughtless omissions I am sure had an effect on my ability to perform as a teacher in the classroom (...)

T(NP8) There were not enough teachers so class numbers rose. The heavier workload was compounded by consistently poor management. Inexplicable changes - often at short notice and without apparent rationale - plagued the system. (...) I (and my colleagues) was reduced to spoon-feeding students the required material, coaching them on how to tackle assessments and exams, regularly marking batches of (a nominal) 350 assignments and entering 350 grades in a computerised system that seemed jinxed with technical glitches. The other officially-sanctioned obsession which took up an inordinate amount of my time was requiring teachers (rather than a dedicated administrator or a computerised system) to deal with DN notices

T(NP8) (...) The sheer number of students and the lack of real or practical support meant that routine tasks like marking papers and entering data into the database consumed several hours beyond the core working hours. I (and many colleagues) were working most evenings and weekends to complete administrative tasks to inflexible deadlines.

T(NP8) Collectively, teacher-managers were cliquey and seemed more anxious to conform rather than query instructions or practices that were professionally suspect. Instructions that filtered down to teachers were often unclear, or had different versions, depending on who one's teacher-manager was.

T(NP8) It sometimes felt as if policies were being created as an afterthought - possibly because of ignorance, lack of training and planning, incompetence, lack of self-confidence, fear of backlash, or laziness.

T(NP8) When teachers questioned the validity of some practice or other, no teacher-manager, however senior, seemed willing to take responsibility, blaming an unknown or un-named person or committee, often allegedly Saudi.

### **c) Emotional frustration – Management style of the Education System**

T(NP8) Although couched in collegiate language, the tone and style of management was, in reality, dictatorial. (...) teacher-manager as being the (only) correct one, the teacher-manager responded with barely concealed irritation, "This is the correct answer; don't argue with me."



T(NP4) The militaristic management style of the managers was somewhat off-putting and insulting, particularly since one was aware that they were not clear about the syllabus and resources; however I realized I simply needed to teach the set materials to my two classes, not ask too many questions or attempt to contribute, then it was a pleasant time; I enjoyed the lack of responsibility working in this big 'machine'.

T(NP3) "Other western teachers told me that we were basically on our own, and if you went against the system, if you complained too much, if you were disagreeable, or worse, insubordinate, that you'd get kicked out – and I saw it happen countless times (...) Several of my Western women friends were fired; one was arrested and spent three nights in jail.

T(NP4) "Other western teachers told me they liked the country, and I did too. The main challenge was working 40 hours a week in one place where we were treated like factory workers and clerks by our bosses and (most of) the students had little or no interest whatsoever in what we were trying to teach them. Living in Saudi was overall very interesting although seriously marred but the exhaustion and purposelessness of the job"

**d) Emotional frustration – teaching experience**

T(NP4) In the beginning I found teaching my Saudi students to be mind-numbing, pointless and exhausting (although there were of course some lovely students) Over time I learnt to sleep as much as possible so that I had the energy to face these students daily, and adapt very pedestrian pacing and expectations to improve my survival skills. I think it is important to be of a calm disposition for these students (...) Overall I can say that I loved my EAP work as my students were mature, well educated, keen, receptive and charming, but I found the X Program experience horrifying.

**e) Reasons for the high staff turnover**

T(NP8) Following 14 resignations from the X programme in that semester (mine was the 15th), and fearing a haemorrhage of teachers, the university had evoked a dormant policy. This was that a resignation could be rejected but if that rejection was declined by the teacher, harsh financial penalties would ensue. My initial outrage was eventually calmed by pragmatic considerations apart from the purely financial: with two more breaks pending, the actual amount of time I would need to teach would amount to just over 4 months

T(NP2) Most shockingly, the institution's willingness to alter marks to positively reflect poor students' grades does students the greatest disservice.

T(NP5) in combination with inefficient management, technical support, resources and materials, communication systems and standardization made for an extremely stressful and unproductive environment. I spent long tedious hours doing admin work and following up (mostly unsuccessfully) on admin and logistical issues and very little time focused on teaching and learning. I became unhappy and dreaded going to work and shortly after made the decision to resign.

**1) Teaching Experience**

**a) Positive teaching experiences**

T(NP6) But, I have to admit from the minute I walked into my first classroom; I was in love. I loved my students, I loved the topics and subjects I was teaching and I loved my leaders. I felt that I had finally found that thing.....that thing that completes you. I felt completed, rejuvenated and fulfilled. I could not have been happier. I was willing to live with each and every restriction imposed upon me for this feeling of I was experiencing; the feeling of complete and utter happiness.(...) I was one of those people who would have happily admitted that my cup was half full. My love of teaching at the University never diminished, I loved it from my first day to the very last day I was there. I believe that my students in KSA were so much more intent on learning. I would describe my students as sponges....I could not fulfil their need for

T(NP6) In my country KSA is seen as a barbaric, backward nation of religions fiends. It is thought of as a country of contraindications. Young girls, once they reach puberty must be covered unless in the company of their immediate family. Immediate being all their female relatives, their mother, father and siblings. They must remain covered with all male relatives; uncles and cousins. Despite now being one of the wealthiest countries in the world it is still stuck in a time warp. A time warp that started with the beginning of a religion. A religion that is almost 900 years old. A religion, Islam which surprisingly or perhaps unsurprisingly translates into the word submission.

**b) Negative perceptions of Saudi society by their friends and family**

T(NP5) Many family members thought it would be a great experience (...) to be living in such a restricted-access country that most of us only hear and read about on the news. Some asked about safety / security, and what my living conditions would be like.

T(NP1) "Many family members thought I was mad and that it was dangerous. They believed that all Muslims hated Christians and that it would be an unpleasant place to live because of the restrictions on women. ie no driving, alcohol, music, dancing and the clothing restrictions they thought impossible.

T(NP3) "Many family members and friends thought I was crazy for going. My friend Rupert knew I would hate it, and I remember him asking "Are you sure this is a good idea?" Another person I know said "It's harder than you think it's going to be".

T(NP4) "Before I arrived I thought KSA was difficult for people who are independent, and harsh in terms of the law. Many family members thought the same (...) He said the young men were so bored that they wrecked cars in the desert for fun.

T(NP7) "Many family members thought that I would not like it and most likely would have a very short stay. They were also extremely concerned for my safety (...) I thought that relocating to this Islamic setting would be scary and more confining but only because of articles I had read and movies I had seen. In my country KSA is seen as a scary place...one in which if you enter, you may never be able to leave again.

T(NP8) "When I decided to move to Saudi Arabia it was mainly, perversely, because it was / is the only country in the Middle Eastern region that was / is closed to casual visitors. This intrigued me. I felt that if I did not accept the job offer in Riyadh, I would never again have the opportunity to experience life inside Saudi Arabia. The more pejorative reports I read from articles, expatriates' forums and the British government's foreign office website - human rights abuses, an intransigent monarchy that used its oil wealth to smother dissent, public beheadings, institutionalised repression of women, systemic censorship, threat of terrorism, endemic corruption - the more drawn I felt to explore the country. I simply wanted to see for myself what it was all about."

**c) Negative perceptions of Saudi society by their fellow colleagues/teachers**

T(NP6) Other western teachers told me to be cautious. Cautious about following the customs, cautious about following the rules and regulations set forth by the University but mostly cautious about speaking about the KSA religion. Apparently western opinions were not wanted. Fair enough.

T(NP5) Other Western teachers told me it could be very challenging and a test of patience working with Saudis because of a different and generally less-developed work ethic, lack of ownership and accountability, lack of professionalism and seriousness, and likelihood to follow through on promises in a timely manner. This indeed proved to be a test of patience and understanding.

**4) Pre-service socio-cultural perceptions of Saudi women:**

**a) Negative Perception of Saudi women:**

T(NP6) My understanding about Saudi women was that they might be sheltered and therefore close-minded or judgmental, have a restricted existence with few opportunities to enjoy life, not be well-travelled or well-read, have very little experience or contact with the opposite sex outside of family or marriage, not outwardly approve of Western women's lifestyle choices.

T(NP6) On the second day of my arrival and on the first time I entered the guarded gates of the University I was overcome by the figures in black. A picture formed in my head; a picture of penguins. This is what the women looked like, a huge sea of penguins, completely covered in black, walking alone or in bunches...forward towards their destination.

T(NP6) I was well aware that the majority of women living in the Middle East lived lives that were far inferior to the men there.

**b) Pre-service Perception of Saudi society:**

T(NP6) All the students were covered head to toe, some even wore gloves so no skin was exposed. Others wore mask like covers over their eyes, two slits created for their eyes, and others wore veils over their heads so the only way they could see was through the fabric. Overwhelming pity and shame filled me the first time I saw this phenomenon. Pity from me for the submission these women participated in and shame that I had been so clueless. The women looked mysterious, captivating or perhaps best described as captivated. The feeling of suffocation would remain with me throughout my stay in KSA.

T(NP6) It appeared to me that so much of these young ladies' lives were controlled by family, culture and religion and that education was perhaps one step in the direction of some form of freedom.

**5) Changes in socio-cultural perceptions: Post-service Attitudinal changes in Western teachers**

**a) Teacher acknowledgement of pre-service misconceptions about Saudi women**

T(NP5) I thought that relocating to this Islamic setting would be interesting because I find living in a country (as opposed to travelling through as a tourist or reading about it) gives you so many opportunities to witness and participate in the culture in an authentic way, develop relationships with local people and learn the language and dispel myths or clarify preconceptions about the country and culture that family, friends, and acquaintances (or I) may hold.

T(NP5) From the beginning I found my Saudi students to be warm, welcoming, driven, and more worldly than I had expected, many of them having obtained a higher degree in Western, English-speaking countries.(...) To my delight, many were not only expressive but outspoken. (...) I was always amazed at how well put-together the ladies were, impeccably made-up, hair done and stylishly dressed, spraying perfume on themselves before the start of the class, and how observant and appreciative they were that I made these same efforts. This reinforced my impression that the exterior image one presents of themselves is as important as intellectual contribution, each being an important component of professionalism. Considering that many were wives and mothers of several children, teachers as well as students, and some striving to be accepted into British doctoral programs, I had enormous respect for their energy and drive.

T(NP2) From the Saudi women I met, I learnt that things are changing in Saudi society. Saudi women are becoming a force to be reckoned with and the more educated they become, the more opportunities that are available to them. E.g. At my university, there is an Art and Design department, with some amazing artist and no restrictions on the work produced. Conservative Islam wouldn't approve of such depictions of people and things. When I first arrived, only men worked in the supermarkets, now there are Saudi check-out-chicks.

T(NP3) My understanding about Saudi women before I lived there was that they were victims. While I still believe that is true to some extent, after my experience, I also believe that they are

not completely powerless. They are participants in the perpetuation of the system that limits their freedom.

T(NP4) My understanding about Saudi women was that they were poor down-trodden souls but after this experience I think many are proud, refined, beautiful, poised, gracious and measured. From the Saudi women who I met, I learn that the Western model is not to be applied. Saudi women are difficult to get to know and I wish I could have got more insight into their country and society.

T(NP6) My understanding about Saudi women was that they were captive to their country, culture and religion but after this experience I think that Saudi women do not have it as bad as the outside world believes. I for one liked not having to drive, I liked to be driven. Saudi women are covered from head to toe in a shapeless black blanket of despair, but what lies beneath that black blanket....a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. Saudi women are beautiful; make-up, clothing, shoes, purses....they (the majority) do not lack materialistically. Sometimes I found myself envying the lifestyles of the stay home moms. The nannies look after the children, the housekeeper cleans the house, the maid does all the cooking, the driver is responsible for getting every person in the family to their designated places, and the husband earns the money. (...)From the Saudi women I met I learned that they struggle just as much as any other women in the world; they have far more restrictions placed on them than women around the world but they have accepted it as the way it is; they are not necessarily happy but they live with it. I think most women I met long for change and some freedom, the thought of someday driving or not wearing an abaya or travelling alone.....fills their dreams.

T(NP8) My experiences, personal and professional, have added unimagined richness to the tapestry of my life. Perhaps one way of conveying my understanding of Saudi women is to give examples of the Saudi women I had taught, and let readers of my narrative draw their own conclusions: orthodoxy, rebellion, hunger, dynamism, religiosity, pragmatism, passion, generosity - they are all there. (...)Numerous students throughout my four years of teaching declared they were not prepared to marry at all, or at least, not marry until they had fulfilled some or all their ambitions. Plans included completing post-graduate studies, travelling abroad by themselves, and becoming successful businesswomen. The more ambitious wanted to be the first female supreme court judge, the first female jet plane pilot, the first female jockey.

T(NP1) Before teaching in KSA my understanding of Saudi women was one of repression and subservience but after this experience I realise this is not the case.

#### **b) Changes in attitude: towards Saudi men**

T(NP6) There are so many gender issues, I do not know where to start, but one thing that I witnessed and it surprised me is that the Saudi fathers truly love their daughters. In fact I witnessed that perhaps fathers love their daughters even more than their sons. I was not prepared for this. In KSA a girl will keep her maiden name after marriage (her father's name) all her life, she does not take her husband's last name. The Saudi father will support his daughter all her life; even after she is married. The father will continue to give his daughter monetary support. Another thing that I observed is when I asked my students to write an essay about their hero, choosing anyone dead or alive in the world; the majority chose their fathers (...) This totally surprised me, I thought that men who allowed women to be beaten and killed by stoning, would be incapable of real love and devotion for any women, but I was wrong.

T(NP1) When I arrived I found that my perception of Saudi men was not correct. I remember going to the supermarket for the first time and not knowing what to expect. I thought that as women we shouldn't talk to men and we had to avert our eyes rather than look at them. This belief was quickly shattered when an elderly Saudi man saw me puzzling over a food item and proceeded to tell me (in good English) how to cook it. After going to Saudi homes and mixing Saudi couples, I realised my perception of how Saudi husbands treat their wives was also incorrect. They were kind and courteous though most followed the separation rules required



## Appendix 16 –Cohort 1: Narrative Frame

<p><b>STAGE 1:</b></p> <p><b>Your story: Part 1</b></p>
<p><i>(minimum 2500 words) Narrative Inquiry is written like a story, including the sentence prompts to keep some uniformity with other participant responses. You can include as much of your own expression in between sentence prompts, if the prompts do not apply to you, you may delete them. You can be descriptive in the storytelling and especially expressive in the multimodal section by adding other media to your story.. Everything will be kept confidential.</i></p>
<p><b>Before</b></p> <p>I am 54 years old. I have been a teacher for 15 years. I was born and raised in Canada, however my family originates from India. I have had the privilege to have lived in and experienced the diversity of five different cultures. My teaching career has taken me to China, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and of course my home country, Canada. I taught in Saudi Arabia from September, 2012 to April 3, 2014. I chose to relocate to KSA because I needed to create a new start for myself. When I decided to move to KSA it was because I wanted to experience the allure of the Middle East. The Middle East has always intrigued me, or perhaps more specifically the mysteries that lay behind the veiled eyes of the women had always fascinated me. So when an opportunity was presented to work, teach and live amongst these women; I naturally said yes. I was well aware that the majority of women living in the Middle East lived lives that were far inferior to the men there. I also knew that I would be subject to all the rules and regulations that applied to women in the Middle East; there would be no exemption just because I was a foreigner. Perhaps because I was born into an Indian family I understood cultural boundaries and the limitations placed on girls or women; especially since Indian women have always been thought of as less value or less important than the boys they are brought up with. I probably understood gender bias a lot better than my counterparts being born into a family of five girls and one boy. I did not experience the culture shock of the Middle East and its customs as other western teachers may have because of being of Indian heritage. I was not surprised, shocked or offended when I was informed that I had to at all times wear an <i>abaya</i> or keep my head covered, because my own culture dictates similar fashion for its women. Although my mother was 15 when she came to Canada she still covers her head, in her house and when she is out and about in our community. She never insisted on her girls covering their heads nor did we; but the idea was not foreign to me, therefore it did not bother me or insult me. The parts of living in KSA that I knew would bother me were not being able to drive, not being able to sit in the front seat of a car, not being able to speak to a man who was not my relative and being forced to cover from head to toe. I knew that KSA had come a long way in the last 50 – 60 years. I knew that the discovery of oil had transformed the lives of the people there. I had also perceived that the get rich quick lifestyles of these desert people may have made them shallow and materialistic. Many of my family members thought Saudi Arabia was barbaric. One person had sat me down prior to my departure and warned me of the strict rules and regulations related to crime. They shared stories of people who to this day were losing their hands, arms, legs and heads after committing a crime. I was warned that women lived insufferable lives and were still stoned in public. I was repeatedly warned about the power of men in KSA. Do not look directly at a man, do not try to shake hands with a man, do not try to address a man when you are alone and most importantly do not ever be alone in the company of a man....so many warnings!! It really all appeared very daunting and grim. I was aware that relocating to this Islamic setting would be different and perhaps difficult as a few years earlier while visiting in China I had for the first time witnessed a harem (I say harem not because they were all draped, but because there were more than a dozen women all walking together in the company of one man). The one man was definitely in charge, he directed the women, told them where to sit, stand or move. I felt stifled watching them in their all black outfits, I almost felt suffocated myself feeling the intense heat of the summer sun on my exposed skin. I felt sad...confused and yet intrigued as to what type of country or religion could possibly impose these types of punishments on their people or more specifically their women. In my country KSA is seen as a barbaric, backward nation of</p>



religions fiends. It is thought of as a country of contraindications. Young girls, once they reach puberty must be covered unless in the company of their immediate family. Immediate being all their female relatives, their mother, father and siblings. They must remain covered with all male relatives; uncles and cousins. Despite now being one of the wealthiest countries in the world it is still stuck in a time warp. A time warp that started with the beginning of a religion. A religion that is almost 900 years old. A religion, Islam which surprisingly or perhaps unsurprisingly translates into the word submission.

### ***During***

I was employed in a University in Saudi Arabia I immediately liked. When I arrived I found that the restrictions on women were really true. On the second day of my arrival and on the first time I entered the guarded gates of the University I was overcome by the figures in black. A picture formed in my head; a picture of penguins. This is what the women looked like, a huge sea of penguins, completely covered in black, walking alone or in bunches...forward towards their destination. All the students were covered head to toe, some even wore gloves so no skin was exposed. Others wore mask like covers over their eyes, two slits created for their eyes, and others wore veils over their heads so the only way they could see was through the fabric. Overwhelming pity and shame filled me the first time I saw this phenomenon. Pity from me for the submission these women participated in and shame that I had been so clueless. The women looked mysterious, captivating or perhaps best described as captivated. The feeling of suffocation would remain with me throughout my stay in KSA. But those were my first impressions. The impressions of someone who had been born into two cultures. The Indian culture in my house and the western influence of my educational institutes and my many friends. As a western woman living in KSA I felt over-whelmed. I felt that there was no escape. I do not mean escape from KSA but escape from my apartment. I could not simply go outside, jump in my car and drive away. I had to pre-plan my outings and departures. Women are not allowed to drive in KSA, it is forbidden. I was informed on many occasions that women are not allowed to drive because they are emotional creatures, they might in a fit cause an accident. I was told that driving takes a great deal of concentration and a person driving a vehicle must be able to multi-task. Basically, women, for their own protection were not allowed to drive. Other western teachers told me to be cautious. Cautious about following the customs, cautious about following the rules and regulations set forth by the University but mostly cautious about speaking about the KSA religion. Apparently western opinions were not wanted. Fair enough. The part of living in KSA I found most difficult was not being able to speak to men. Yes, we spoke to men when ordering our food, or driving in their cabs, but we were not allowed to have men friends. Definitely, we met men mostly other expats at different functions, at a local friend's house or at an Embassy party. But it was impossible to meet a male friend for a cup of coffee or a meal. That was a crime punishable by jail time. This actually happened to a good friend of mine. Living in Saudi was overall a great experience. I met some wonderful people, people who changed my life, these included my students, co-workers and other expats. I made lasting friendships during my time in KSA and for this I am grateful. As an English language teacher, I taught language level 4 and IELTS band. I had classes with between 30 to 45 students and I worked 40 hours a week. In the beginning of my first year I was apprehensive. I was afraid that my teaching style or method may not live up to the expectation of the University, my leaders or more importantly my students. But that was never one of my issues. On my first day of teaching I was warned that I was replacing a much beloved teacher who had just recently completed her teaching contract and so I knew that I might have an issue with reluctant stand offish students. But, I have to admit from the minute I walked into my first classroom; I was in love. I loved my students, I loved the topics and subjects I was teaching and I loved my leaders. I felt that I had finally found that thing.....that thing that completes you. I felt completed, rejuvenated and fulfilled. I could not have been happier. I was willing to live with each and every restriction imposed upon me for this feeling of I was experiencing; the feeling of complete and utter happiness. I was never able to relate to those teachers who would complain about their classes, students or curriculum. I was one of those people who would have happily admitted that my cup was half full. My love of teaching at the University never diminished, I loved it from my first day to the very last day I was there. If I had any issues at all it was with Administration, the people running the show, or better yet the people who thought they were running the show. Never have I worked in an atmosphere that was as disorganized as in the University I worked at. I found that my teaching experience in Saudi to be very different from my teaching experiences in Canada. I believe that my students in KSA were so much more intent on learning. I would describe my students as sponges...I could not fulfill their need for knowledge and

experience fast enough. For the most part my students were good, kind loving young women. Young women who were yearning for knowledge and change. It appeared to me that so much of these young ladies lives were controlled by family, culture and religion and that education was perhaps one step in the direction of some form of freedom. The King of KSA allows its female students (as long as they are accompanied by a male family member) to attend post graduate institutions abroad; in many cases this is a form of freedom for the female students. Living and experiencing life in a country that does not focus on rules, regulations, and restrictions is a change for the females of KSA. In order for them to be considered for this type of lifestyle they must first prove themselves at the University or under graduate level.

Overall I can say that my teaching experience was awesome. I remember one time, a student came to see me after class. This student (let's call her Helen) did not have a good attendance record and when she did come to class she was often late. She was not doing well in my class and I had doubts of her passing my level. I was surprised when Helen came to see me after school because although she was friendly she had never really sought me out to assist her with her assignments or asked for extra assistance, nor was she one of the students who often stayed late to chat. On that afternoon I knew that Helen had sought me out for a very specific reason, she looked bewildered and sad. I knew she needed an ear. I was determined to not let her down. I walked over to the door of the classroom and closed it and went and sat down by her. The first thing Helen said was ...Teacher I need to speak to you, but if anyone finds out about my topic I could be arrested. Instantly, my radar was on alert. I felt this subject we were about to broach might be one of the many topics we as western teachers had been warned not to discuss with our students along with movies, dating, boys etc. But, I also knew that coming to me must also have cost her, her pride. So I sat and with her and informed her that whatever we discussed in the classroom that day would never leave the classroom. I also knew that having this conversation with Helen may be at the cost of my career at the University. But the nurturer inside would not have it any other way. Helen went on to describe her life, her father a psychiatrist, her mother a housekeeper, her brother was a member of the *Matawa* (men who enforced religion amongst the public and her twin sister a student. Helen said that she did not fit well with her family. Helen had recently cut her hair, her parents although not happy with her decision were willing to live with it; her brother on the other hand had beat her, during the beating he had bitten her face requiring 14 stitches and a long absence from school. Her brother had not been reprimanded by either parent. Helen also confessed she liked girls...she said she was gay and had a girlfriend. Helen informed me that she was not allowed to admit that she was gay as it would mean her death. In KSA being gay is punishable by death, it is in fact illegal to be gay. Helen said that she had tried to commit suicide many times but had not been successful. She sat with me for over an hour and cried while slowly allowing her story to come out. I was devastated.... how could I possibly help her.....what could I do...what was I to do. I did nothing ...I sat, I listened and I consoled. I told her about life in Canada and other countries where being different was acceptable. I encouraged her to do better at school so she might be presented with the opportunity to go abroad and experience life in a society where there was more acceptance. I tried to explain to her that education in many ways was freedom; from ignorance and intolerance but mostly freedom from barriers. Needless to say Helen did not pass my level and did have to repeat it and she did come to see me several times during the following semester. She had moved to the campus and was doing well at school. She was able to concentrate on her education as she was no longer living at home. I still think of Helen and wonder how she is doing. This situation taught me so much, it taught me that all my life I had taken my liberties for granted.

### **After**

What I learnt from my experience was invaluable. I left in April, 2012 because I opened my mouth to speak when I should have stayed shut and listened. The University cancelled my contract after I wrote them an email about the deficiencies I witnessed at the University on a daily basis; administration inaccuracies and injustices. After living in KSA for almost two years I really feel stifled when I think about the country. My understanding about Saudi women was that they were captive to their country, culture and religion but after this experience I think that Saudi women do not have it as bad as the outside world believes. I for one liked not having to drive, I liked to be driven. Saudi women are covered from head to toe in a shapeless black blanket of despair, but what lies beneath that black blanket...a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. Saudi women are beautiful; make-up, clothing, shoes, purses... they (the majority) do not lack materialistically. Sometimes I found myself envying the lifestyles of the stay home moms. The nannies look after the

children, the housekeeper cleans the house, the maid does all the cooking, the driver is responsible for getting every person in the family to their designated places, and the husband earns the money. The poor stay home mom...meets her friends for fancy lunches at the most expensive restaurants, has her weekly manicures and pedicures, and has the burden of shopping for the latest and greatest. I would not mind sleeping in every single day, catering a party for dozens of people without lifting a finger....what a great life that would be.....but then I wake up from my day dreaming and remember how much I value my sense of freedom, way too much to ever live that life. From the Saudi women I met I learned that they struggle just as much as any other women in the world; they have far more restrictions placed on them than women around the world but they have accepted it as the way it is; they are not necessarily happy but they live with it. I think most women I met long for change and some freedom, the thought of someday driving or not wearing an *abaya* or travelling alone...fills their dreams. The women in Saudi are women with dreams and desires, they look for change, they are just like us. There are so many gender issues, I do not know where to start, but one thing that I witnessed and it surprised me is that the Saudi fathers truly love their daughters. In fact, I witnessed that perhaps fathers love their daughters even more than their sons. I was not prepared for this. In KSA a girl will keep her maiden name after marriage (her father's name) all her life, she does not take her husband's last name. The Saudi father will support his daughter all her life; even after she is married. The father will continue to give his daughter monetary support. Another thing that I observed is when I asked my students to write an essay about their hero, choosing anyone dead or alive in the world; the majority chose their fathers. So, yes religion and culture dictates that a father not allow his daughter(s) to go out in public unveiled, and he does not allow his daughter to drive or travel unaccompanied but a Saudi father like any other father in the world loves his daughter unconditionally throughout their lives. This totally surprised me, I thought that men who allowed women to be beaten and killed by stoning would be incapable of real love and devotion for any women, but I was wrong. My teaching experience in KSA was interesting because it showed me that we all have set perceptions and ideas about certain topics; and we believe that our perceptions are true and believable, but then we are put in circumstances and situations that prove us wrong. If I could give advice to female western women going to teach in KSA, I would say go with an open mind and remember that you cannot change things, nor are people necessarily looking for change.

## Appendix 17 –Cohort 2a: Interview Frame

**150302\_0006**

### Speaker key

Time stamp: \_00:00:00\_

RE Researcher

PA Participant

RE Right, so here we are. Thank you very, very much for participating.

PA You're welcome.

RE I know that, um, you're quite intrigued about the different questions and stuff...

PA Yes.

RE ... and you've read through them and there's lots to talk about. So, um, let's start with the first section here, that's the importance of English, okay. Have you ever travelled to any English speaking countries?

\_00:00:25\_

PA No.

RE No?

PA No.

RE Okay. Wow. And where would you like to go if you could?

PA Maybe, ah, ah, United States, maybe, Canada.

RE Canada or the United States.

PA Yes.

RE Anywhere in particular that inspires you, like New York or...?

\_00:00:43\_

PA Yes, New York.

RE Really?

PA Yes. And in Canada, Toronto and Vancouver.

RE Vancouver.

PA Yes.

RE Oh my goodness. Okay, so that kind of area of the world is intriguing. And why has it intrigued you?

PA Yes, because I want, I want to go there to, ah, to see the culture, see the differences.

RE The differences between this culture and there.

\_00:01:10\_

PA Yes, and the people there.

RE That's amazing, that's amazing. So just to, kind of, explore different places.

PA Yes, exactly.

RE Mm-hmm. And how do you feel about English as a language, specifically as a language, what do you think about it?

PA Yes, I feel it's, it's really easy to learn language and, um, I think for me it's really important because a lot of people speak that language, not just a country or two.

RE Yes, yes it's become much more important for the world now.

PA And a lot of countries, English is their native, ah... sorry, the mother tongue.

RE Mother tongue, native language, exactly. And so you say that it's an easy language to learn.

PA Yes.

RE Do you feel positive about it as a language?

\_00:01:54\_

PA Yes, I do.

RE You like learning it?

PA Yes.

RE Are you learning it at the moment?

PA Ah, yes. I'm improving my English.

RE And what kind of courses, what kind of things have you taken at university?

PA At the university I took, ah, IELTS. I studies IELTS, then I, ah, I...

RE Took the test?

PA Yes, I took the test, yes.

RE So you're familiar with these kind of interviews and that kind of thing.

PA Yes.

\_00:02:24\_

RE And was your IELTS band, what kind of level did you get for your IELTS?

PA I, ah, was, ah, level five.

RE That's amazing. That's very good. So band five and you passed everything that was...

PA Yes, thankfully.

RE That's excellent, that's excellent. And do you think English is as important, not more important, but as important as Arabic for you?

PA Yes.

RE Really?

PA Yes.

RE Equal importance?

PA Yes.

\_00:02:54\_

RE And this is maybe a personal thing, but why do you feel that, why do you think it's as important for you?

PA Like, first of all, learning other language than your, ah, mother tongue is really important and for me I think, like I said, English is, ah, as important as my, as, ah, Arabic. Why? Because, like I said, a lot of people speak English and I can, ah, understand other people, other countries or other cultures.

RE Other cultures. So you can connect with people.

PA Yes, I can connect with them.

RE You can get to know different ways, different things...

PA Exactly. Yes, I can speak with the. I can, I can understand them.

RE And there's that curiosity to know...

PA Exactly.

RE ... beyond, beyond what, what is here.

PA If I was speaking only in Arabic I'm not going to, um, break, ah, the bubble that we are in.

\_00:03:53\_

RE Yes, so you're talking about it as like a bubble.

PA I will, I will only be social with the Arabic speakers.

RE And one culture, one way of doing things, one...

PA Exactly. I'm not going to understand other cultures, the interest of other people and their culture and their lives.

RE So you're going to be, kind of, um, blocked from...

PA Yes, exactly.

RE And you're in this bubble so you can't break through that bubble, burst the bubble...

PA Exactly.

RE ... into a bigger, a bigger understanding.

PA Yes.

RE And do you think, do you think, ah, that you were saying about the importance of, of sharing and connecting with the world and what other things does English help you do, maybe academically for example, is it important at university to speak English?

\_00:04:35\_

PA Yes, I think so, because, um, first of all, ah, some of the teachers are not, ah, not Arabic so when I want to talk to the teacher I have to speak her language.

RE Yes, absolutely. And, um, if you don't succeed in English... you got a band five for IELTS, if you didn't get a band five how would that affect your, your, your academic career?

PA Ah, first of all, I got six, not five. That was a mistake.

RE Oh, you got six, okay.

PA But by five I meant the level.

RE Oh, the level five, I'm sorry. And then I changed it to band... so you got a band six?

PA Yes.

\_00:05:17\_

RE Wow, that's different, that's very different. That's, that's higher intermediate.

PA Yes.

RE That's almost advanced.

PA Yes.

RE Very good... So, um, you're saying that, um, you got, ah, we were talking about, um, if you didn't get that band six, level five,

what, you know, how do you get stopped in terms of your access to different faculties or...?

PA Yes, um, um, so you mean what would happen if I didn't... if I got, um, lower..?

RE If you failed in terms of the target band what would have happened?

PA Um, hmmm, it's actually a little bit difficult question.

RE Sure, and I haven't prepared you, it's not on there, I'm just throwing it at...

PA No, it's okay. I want to think...

RE Yes, think about it, take your time.

PA I think for me actually six is not enough. So it wasn't a great band for me. But, ah, if I took a lower band maybe I, I'm not going to speak English very well, I'm not going to... that means that, ah, I'm not a good speaker, I'm not a good writer...

\_00:06:37\_

RE So you're not bilingual.

PA Yes.

RE You're... yes.

PA Yes, that means that my English is...

RE Intermediate.

PA Yes, in the middle. Not good and not bad.

RE And in this university if your English is in the middle can you access different faculties or do they require...?

PA Some. Some of, ah, the faculties require a really high, ah, level in English.

RE A high level.

PA Yes, high level.

\_00:07:00\_

RE Which faculties, do you know which ones?

PA Yes, for example medicine requires a really high band.

RE Dentistry, I imagine?

PA Yes. Because every subject in, ah, in the medicine school is in English.

RE They teach it in English?

PA Yes, they teach... everything is in English.

RE Everything is in English?

PA Yes.

RE Wow.

PA So if you're not good at English you're not going to pass.

RE You're not going to become a doctor or a dentist.

PA Yes.

\_00:07:27\_

RE So that's quite a, that's quite a...

PA Challenging.

RE Yes, that's very challenging. And what are you hoping to go on for?

PA Business management.



RE Business management, okay, okay.

PA Hope so.

RE Um, can you tell me the role English is playing in KSA? Now, what I'm talking about here is the role, how do you think English is affecting KSA, Saudi Arabia, for people who are talking about universities, talking about...?

\_00:07:55\_

PA I think, um, English, how English affected KSA, people are now more opened, open-minded because, ah, they can understand other people, other, ah, cultures.

RE So they're integrating, you feel.

PA Yes, exactly.

RE And in the previous generation were they integrating as much?

PA No. Because they were only speaking Arabic. When, um, when a western person comes, for example, to Saudi Arabia they are not going to understand him, they will... they are not going to understand... yes.

RE They're going to perceive him differently.

PA Yes. There will be a block between him and, and them.

RE Absolutely.

PA Because they can't, um, socialise, they can't connect...

RE Connect with that person, right. So there's lots of maybe visible differences...

PA Yes, exactly.

\_00:08:52\_

RE Like dress or behaviour...

PA And even if someone had an idea, ah, about the other person, maybe a wrong one, it's not going to be corrected because they can't interact with each other.

RE And ask and discuss and share.

PA Yes, they can't do that.

RE And learn from each other. There's no interaction. So English in a way is, is the adapter. It's connecting these two...

PA Yes, exactly. A lot of people can connect and, and for me that's really great because, ah, I've noticed now that, um, a lot of the Saudis, ah, can understand other countries, other cultures. Like I said, they are now open, open-minded. And even other cultures now they can understand Saudi Arabia because now we speak their language we can explain to them.

RE Share and explain.

PA We can share our information and all that about our lives...

RE Our lifestyle, everything.

PA Yes. That's amazing. So it's a very important role, in fact, that English is playing.

RE Yes.

\_00:09:53\_

RE Do you think English is more than a language? Now, more than a language in what sense. Maybe we could pick another language, possibly we could say, I don't know, Italian or French or maybe German or maybe, I don't know, ah, an African language, but do you think compared to other languages English is more than a language now?

PA Yes. It transfers culture. Because let's say that I, I, now I learned French. I will definitely go to France and understand the culture because I speak the language. So that what French did to me. It, it made me more curious. If you speak another language you will definitely be, ah, interested in what country speaks this language and you will definitely...

RE The culture behind the language. So it's not just...

PA Exactly.

RE ... kind of, the way to communicate, like the tools to communicate. No, you can build things in your communication and understand more. That's really great. Okay, here I've got a quote. It's a perspective, ah, that Saudi women should be bilingual in English, bilingual, that they speak both English and Arabic. They should. It's more an obligation, in a way. Do you think that that is right, do you agree?

\_00:11:26\_

PA Yes, I do. I do think so. Yes, they should speak more than... more than other language than Arabic.

RE Other languages. And is it the same if they speak any other language or do you think that it should be English?

PA First I think English is the basic. You have to learn English. Then you have to learn another language.

RE Okay, so it's a requirement.

PA Yes.

RE A requirement for what exactly, do you think?

\_00:11:52\_

PA Now, um, it's the main idea that I'm thinking about. A lot, maybe half the world is speaking English and other countries, they also speak English, even if it's not their mother tongue. So when you learn English that mean that you will have, um, um, how can I say that, you have the opportunity to communi...

RE Communicate.

PA Exactly, that's the word. With other countries, with other people.

RE The rest of the world.

PA Yes.

RE The whole world you can communicate with. So in a way that makes it a requirement. And women particularly, do you think that it's important that they can communicate in that way for...

PA Yes.

RE ... for women?

PA Yes. Um, let's say I'm a mother and I speak English. Kids now, the, this generation are now studying English, a better English than it used to be.

RE ... than it used to be taught.

\_00:13:02\_

PA Yes. And let's say that my, ah, my kids speak English and I can't speak English, I mean, that's really... and also, and also as, ah, as a Saudi woman let's say I travelled with my father or my husband, by speaking other language I don't have to rely on...

RE On him.

PA Yes, on him to translate to me. I can go wherever I want and speak for myself.

RE Self-reliance.

PA Yes, that makes me really, um, I trust myself and have more confidence, yes.

RE That's a very good point, that it's giving you confidence and you can rely on yourself, you're self-sufficient. You don't rely on a man, you can interact, um, and speak with other people. So, um, how do you feel about yourself now that you can speak English fluently, has it given you that same confidence?

PA Exactly, yes. It's given me that confidence. And the fact that I speak more than one language is, ah, is a beautiful thing.

RE You feel proud of it.

\_00:14:11\_

PA Yes, I feel proud of myself.

RE You feel like it's an accomplishment.

PA Yes, and like I said, now I can communicate with anyone I want, like for example, for you, if I met you maybe three, four years ago I'm not going to be able to communicate, to connect with you because I can't speak your language.

RE Exactly. And so you've realised that it, it's enriched your life as well as made you feel proud about your own intelligence and capacity...

PA Yes, and now I can understand anything that, ah, written in English, let's say on the social media. I don't have to translate it or ask, ah, someone else to tell me what's written there because now I can understand this.

RE That's absolutely right. And you said that, um, do you think people can treat you differently in Saudi Arabia if you didn't speak English? So if you didn't have, um, a very

high level of English do you think that people would, ah, would treat you differently?

\_00:15:10\_

PA Ten years ago maybe no one would care if I spoke or not. Let's say ten years ago people, if I spoke English people would think that, wow, I must be really, really smart.

RE That's amazing.

PA Yes.

RE That it was so unusual.

PA Yes, it was unusual when you speak other language fluently they will think, wow.

RE You must have come from a very wealthy family, maybe, or you've been abroad.

PA Yes, or, ah, or maybe you're really educated.

RE So it has a status.

PA Yes.

RE And now?

\_00:15:43\_

PA But now, now people, if you didn't speak English people will treat you differently. Why are you not speaking English? You didn't have an excuse.

RE You don't have an excuse.

PA Yes, they teach English in school, everything right now, ah, on the social media, your phone is in English. Everyone has a phone, smartphone it's in English. So people will definitely treat you differently now if you didn't speak English.

RE Amazing. And, um, and do you think, um, Saudi women, again going back to women, have greater influence as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters? You spoke about travelling and having that confidence and how you feel about it, but do you think women generally in Saudi Arabia if they speak English they have an influence in how things are done and how, how, how, um, maybe at home or...?

PA Yes.

RE ... different things and different sectors.

PA Hmm, as, ah, as a mother she will be able to, let's say teach her kids English, help them with, ah, English subjects in school.

\_00:16:51\_

RE So she's referred to for English.

PA Yes. She can also rely on herself. She doesn't have to, like, for example, if I had a new electronic device and I have... I want to know how to work it, I don't have to call my husband or my brother or any male who speaks English because she know how to.

RE Yes. And that influences how other people...

PA And for me actually when I see a woman, Saudi woman speak English really fluently, a mother, ah, I feel she's like really smart because when you see a woman – this is

really important – when you see a woman, Saudi woman speak English fluently, you will see a big amount of, um, confidence when she, when she speaks because she will feel like, ah, she's a smart lady or, um, really good educated woman.

RE Wow. Her persona has changed because she speaks English.

PA Yes.

\_00:17:47\_

RE So she's... there's a different energy about her.

PA Yes. Yes, I notice that every time I see a Saudi woman..

RE And do you think she's listened to more because she has this strength and confidence?

PA Yes, maybe because, um, no one can pick up on her because she, um...

RE No one can pick on her?

PA Yes, yes. No one can...

RE No one can bully her because she has this inner defence almost.

PA Yes, exactly.

RE Very interesting. And let's say if she want to be a businesswoman or to, like, yes, to do a business now she, um, let's say if there is, ah, she works um... I had an idea and it's lost.

PA It's okay, it's okay.

RE related to what you're saying as a businesswoman, as a professional, a woman who's able to start her own business in English, do the marketing, the way that...

PA She can communicate with the employees Let's say if there's an employee is not, ah, um, an Arabic speaker she can communicate with him. And all that stuff.

\_00:18:55\_

RE That's amazing. So there's...

PA This is how English is really important.

RE Authority, you're saying, because she can... she can manage her life, whether it's at home, whether it's in a profession, and how people see her, she has more status. You were talking a little bit about status.

PA Because she will understand everything because right now everything is in English because English is a global language. Everyone is speaking English. It's like, let's say if there is five people, each one of them is speak other language than English how they will communicate? By English, right?

RE Yes. So it is used by lots of international people.

PA Yes.

RE The common language will be English.

\_00:19:36\_

PA Yes.

RE That's fantastic. Okay, so moving on, what does globalisation mean for you?

PA Hmmm, um, for me I think globalisation open a really doors for countries and people to communicate, to understand each other and now every country... not every country but a lot of people are being the same, even if they were from a different country or they speak other language.

RE The same? We're sharing similar...

PA Yes, similar...

RE Similar things.

PA Yes.

RE Like what kind of things remind you of globalisation, what do you think is the most common?

PA The first thing I can, like, think of right now is clothes.

RE Clothes, fashion.

\_00:20:25\_

PA Fashion.

RE How we're all becoming very similar...

PA Yes, all become one, yes.

RE We're competing almost on a global platform for fashionable items and things and brand names here in Saudi Arabia, lots of brands similar to different brands abroad.

PA Now I can... if there is something in let's say London from a brand came, let's say, um, a dress maybe, it will come to Saudi Arabia.

RE It will come to Saudi Arabia and Saudi women will buy it.

PA Yes, I don't have to import it from one place...

RE Yes, exactly.

PA Also the social media. Now everyone like connecting to each other by... it's globalisation.

RE Now tell me a little about social media. What's the most used social media, kind of, ah, platform? Would it be Facebook or are there others?

\_00:21:17\_

PA There is not, like, the most, it's like one thing, there is a lot of things. Like Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook.

RE So there's so many different things.

PA Yes. These things, um, ah, it made people connect even if they were in other countries.

RE Right, so there's an international connection happening in social media.

PA Exactly.

RE But... are there still, um, within Saudi Arabia... cultural barriers to this kind of connection? is it still quite restricted, do you think?



PA No. No.

RE So women at home, they're connecting to these different platforms with ease, with...?

PA Yes. For example

\_00:22:01\_

PA Yes, I have a lot of, ah, Arabic women now starting their own business in home using Instagram.

RE Really?

PA Yes. And I'm starting to do that.

RE Tell me about it. That sounds really exciting.

PA Yes, well, let's say step by step. I am a student, okay, I don't have a lot of money and also my parents are not wealthy, I want to open a business. Why? Because I have a passion. So, ah, what I'm going to do is open an account on Instagram and I can sell whatever I want, ah, on that, ah, account. Now, it's, ah, a network shop.

RE A network shop?

\_00:22:45\_

PA Yes.

RE Amazing.

PA I don't have to pay taxes or anything. It's really easy just working from home.

RE Easy, you're working from home.

PA Yes, there is a lot of benefits from doing that. It's just... yes, a lot of Saudi women do that because let's say I'm a mother, I have kids, I have husband, let's say I'm also studying, I don't have a lot of time to open a shop, like, outside...

RE Takes a lot of permission as well, doesn't it, in Saudi Arabia.

PA Yes, yes, exactly.

RE You need approval and all sorts of things.

PA Yes.

RE You need a guardian to open a business now or that was in the past?

PA I'm not sure about that actually. But with Instagram women are... a lot of women, I can't tell you how many do that because it's really, really a lot. Not just in Saudi Arabia.

\_00:23:36\_

RE It's a big market and it's working.

PA Yes, it's working.

RE People are buying and selling. How does it work? You promote something that you have on Instagram and people come to your house to buy it?

PA No, no. They... I have, ah, a number. They will call me and I will send a driver to...

RE To drop it off.

PA Yes.

RE As a delivery service.

PA Yes, or they will send their driver or they will come, yes, and I give it to them.

RE And what is your business going to be?

PA It's a baking business.

RE Baking business?

PA Yes.

RE Okay.

\_00:24:07\_

PA Baking cakes and selling.

RE Okay. And this is a passion that you've had for a long time?

PA Yes.

RE And, um, and so you, you think this is going to be a viable way of, through social networking, through pretty much globalisation, the offshoots of globalisation, through technology and networking and everything, that this is a big enough platform to earn an income for...

PA Yes.

RE That's amazing. You know, we don't know this, we don't know this. We don't realise just how important it is.

\_00:24:40\_

PA Yes, and, um, ah, how can I say that, ah, it's just there is so many benefits from doing that. And it's just globalisation, it has bad things but the good things are Instagram. Now I can't believe that...

RE It's a freedom.

PA Yes. Myself, I can't believe that. A lot of Saudi women are now relying on themselves. They have the power now and they earn money by themselves.

RE Social mobility, as in they can employ, they can earn, they have their independence.

PA Yes. And it's not easy for the businesswomen herself, also for the customers because, ah, let's say I sell dresses on Instagram and I want to buy dress maybe. I don't have to go to the mall and shop, I can do it just open Instagram and see the...

RE There is another point which having lived in Saudi Arabia now for a couple of years, trying dresses on is a problem in malls, and shops, because sometimes they don't have the dressing booths where you can go and you can try something on and see if it looks good. It's quite difficult that you can take it home and then you have to return it, you have a three day return policy. Whereas this is possibly maybe a way to...

\_00:26:09\_

PA Yes, that, no, on Instagram I, once I communicate with, ah, a businesswoman. I told her, what if I want to buy a blouse, I said what if it's not my size? She said, I can't do anything about it.

RE Okay, so that's a slightly different thing, isn't it.

PA Yes.

RE So it's a buy and sell, you choose your product and you risk it and you buy it. Just like eBay or other platforms, and you buy it. I was thinking maybe there's a kind of service set up where women can try on the clothes and the driver is waiting?

PA No.

RE No. You pay for it and it's done.

PA Yes.

RE Okay, that makes sense as well. Otherwise, who knows if a business will succeed if everyone keeps trying things on and it... okay, this is great. Let's move on, then. Some academics say English is only functional, it does not transmit culture. You said a little while back that, no, English is...

PA No.

RE Do you think that, um, you can teach English in a functional way?

PA Yes, I can but it's not fun.

RE It's not fun.

\_00:27:13\_

PA It's going to be really boring because I'm not going to be really interested in learning it...because it's not connecting you to people, it's just very, very... it's very dry

RE Exactly.

PA It's not going to make me... it's not going to give that interest that would make me proceed on learning that language.

RE It doesn't stimulate you enough? it doesn't have that incentive to make you learn the language.

PA Yes, exactly.

\_00:27:40\_

PA Because it's cutting off maybe the most interesting side of the language. Yes.

RE Okay. And what about, other people say that English is a vehicle for western culture, as in that it's carrying western culture with it. Do you think...?

PA Yes, it does.

RE It does.

PA It does.

RE Outside the classroom mostly?

PA Yes, mostly I would say... mostly outside, yes.

RE Mostly outside, yes. And inside the classroom, um, let's talk about it, have you ever had western English teachers?

PA Yes, I have.

\_00:28:12\_

RE Only at university or also at school as well?

PA No, only on university.

RE Only at university. So you didn't have any western teachers before?

PA No.

RE Okay, so your first contact with a westerner, a woman from outside Saudi Arabia, was at your university. And did they influence you positively, negatively?

PA Oh, they influencing me really positively.

RE That first impact to get to know them and everything. And here have you ever had western teachers who spoke about non-Muslim values in the classroom?

PA Um...

RE Non-Muslim values as in maybe they start talking about themselves, their personal life, different things, or is that restricted in the university?

PA No, no, some of the teachers talk.. sometimes, not always...

RE A little bit.

\_00:29:06\_

PA Yes, a little bit, yes.

RE They can't go too...

PA Yes, they never went too far.

RE Right. And is there, was there a reason for that?

PA Maybe because the university is really strict about that, but for me as a student I really don't think there is something wrong with speaking your mind and talking about your culture or your, um, your, um, ah, religion.

RE Your beliefs, your way of seeing things, yes. So, so maybe a westerner, a western teacher in your experience at university maybe spoke a little bit, maybe a slight difference, maybe she said I am Christian not Muslim...

PA They never actually talk about the religion, mostly about their lifestyles, sometimes... not always.

RE Little things.

PA Yes, little things.

RE Okay. And have you ever wanted to ask more about their western perspective in the classroom?

\_00:30:01\_

PA Yes, I always wanted to do that.

RE While you're sitting there you're thinking, oh, I want to ask this.

PA Yes.

RE And why didn't you ask them?

PA I didn't want, want them to feel uncomfortable by asking these questions.

RE Are you told not to ask certain questions before you go into the classroom or...?

PA No.

RE Was there, like, a student handbook or anything?

PA No, not at all.

\_00:30:21\_

RE Okay.

PA But I can understand when a teacher feels uncomfortable because, like I said, the university is really strict and I don't want to put the teacher in a position where...

RE In a difficult position.

PA Yes.

RE And you know that there are certain regulations about what you share and...

PA Yes, exactly.

RE That's very useful, okay. So in a way the university is trying to teach the language in a functional way.

PA Yes.

RE Just giving you the English grammar and this is how you pass your IELTS. So, okay, can you remember any interesting stories about your English teachers, anything that comes to mind about them as people?

PA Yes, it's not just stories, it's... like I said, it's really not a lot of things they say, it's just, um, for example, we studied IELTS and there's certain chapters and IELTS... the IELTS book, it has interesting subjects and we give our thoughts and they, the teachers give their, um, thoughts and...

RE Yes, so it's a classroom discussion that perhaps was very interesting.

\_00:31:36\_

PA Yes. The discussion part was the most fun, ah, part of the, ah, class for me.

RE Because it was free and you would be able to talk about different things.

PA Yes.

RE Yes, yes, very, very interesting. Okay, so let's go on then, we've got the last and final part. Now, this is slightly different because...

PA Yes, I remember it actually.

RE Tell me.

PA One of my teachers, ah, she told us that she's going to, ah, it was, ah, oral last class and she said tomorrow let's sit together and maybe have, ah, some crisps and, ah, and we bought a cake and it was a small party.

RE Exactly.

\_00:32:20\_

PA When she said crisps we didn't understand what she meant by crisps. When we sat... she was from London. When we sat she came to the classroom with a bag of chips, Lays chips, and we said, oh, that's chips, and she said, no, it's crisps. And we had this conversation about crisps and chips. She said, no, in London chips means these thickly cut...

RE Potatoes...

PA Yes, potatoes. And we said, no, that's not chips.

RE That's fantastic. So you had a whole conversation about sharing...

PA Yes, it was fun actually.

RE That sounds amazing, really, really good. That's fantastic. Okay, so, I know that you've got a little bit of time left, um, but, um, let's talk about English in an Islamic setting, I mean like Saudi Arabia, 100% Muslim. Do you think being in a globalised world can influence you as a Muslim? Do you think that by speaking English, ah, entering into these socialising kind of networks, ah, intercultural discussions, does it influence you, um, as a Muslim?

\_00:33:30\_

PA Yes. Um, why, because, um, first of all, it will make me understand what other people think about Islam and also understand how people think I will understand the belief of other people. Not just, like, my mind will be, ah, opened. Not that my beliefs will change, no, but I will understand other people.

RE You can relate to them.

PA Yes, and also... and also by speaking the same English I can connect with them. Maybe if people have... and for me personally when I'm on the social media and I see other people, I read the wrong thoughts about Islam, I really want to change that and give them the right idea what we believe, ah, and why we do that. But sometimes I can't because I don't think... it's because my language is not that, ah, great and for me...

RE That's amazing. So what you're saying is that, um, by speaking English you can challenge and you can, ah, discuss and debate...

PA Yes, I can open a really...

RE An interesting...

PA Discussion.

\_00:34:47\_

RE Discussion about it and you can...

PA [Overtalking] and all that.

RE ... inform people in fact. You can share as a Saudi, ah, woman, a Saudi Muslim woman, you can explain...

PA And people will think I want change other people's beliefs. No, no, I will just... I want to communicate with them. I want them to understand me as I will understand them.

RE Yes. So there's a respect that...

PA Yes, exactly, it's a respect.

RE Instead of this hostility that many people are feeling now maybe about east and west and Muslim and non-Muslims and Christian and... and it's more complicated than that.

PA And I think if, if I can do that and have a discussion with other, ah, people I think maybe I will erase a small part of racism.

RE Yes, that ignorance about it is that racism? of us and them?

PA Exactly.  
 RE I think that's a wonderful...  
 \_00:35:43\_  
 PA And I feel I will give people a good picture about Islam.  
 RE Do you feel that at the moment there's a rather negative picture that's being portrayed?  
 PA Yes. It's not just small negativity, it's a really, really big... it's bigger than me also. There is a lot of stuff that I don't understand...  
 RE ...how it can happen.  
 PA Yes. How even when people start talking and talking about Islam and how bad it is, I feel bad... I want to defend, I want to, um, protect what I've understood...  
 \_00:36:21\_  
 PA And I speak English...and I feel bad - what if I didn't speak English... I don't know what I will feel.  
 RE Can you imagine? can you imagine how...  
 PA I can't imagine. If they can't correct those kind of misinterpretations, maybe misconceptions as well about this culture and possibly also things that are very different when you come to Saudi Arabia, westerners, how we have to dress or the reasons why we cover the hair or the face.  
 RE Very visual things that even  
 PA ah! go beyond language, you know. When you step off that plane it's the first difference, you know. The men are in Thobes and the women are covered....  
 \_00:37:07\_  
 PA When we speak... when you speak, um, English I can, like, ah, I can communicate with you and when you said, when you come to Saudi Arabia, I'm pretty sure that you were a little bit afraid or had difficulties, like you said, the way you dress and...  
 RE Yes. There's so many differences.  
 PA Yes. And maybe I can, like I said, I can explain to you, I can make you feel, ah, comfortable.  
 RE Exactly. That you can unpack the reasoning behind the way that things are here and the culture and share that and...  
 PA Yes, and maybe I will tell you that you really don't have to do that just because...  
 RE Yes. And you can make people feel, understood, um... the other side of the story and share that, which is really, really great... so, I mean, what you've said here, as a Muslim speaking English can connect you to a globalised world. How do you perceive your role in that globalised community? You've explained that it really is about, um, sharing the other side of the story and being able to communicate how this culture works, what it,

what it... how it relates to the rest of the world.  
 PA Yes, I think not as just a Muslim, as a... it's as a person, a female Saudi Muslim person, I can, like, share my personality with the world.  
 RE Exactly.  
 \_00:38:41\_  
 PA Yes, it's...  
 RE You can have a voice in that...  
 PA Yes, exactly. It's a beautiful idea when you think about it.  
 RE And I think that it's a wonderful thing because by sharing your voice you make, um, women in Saudi Arabia and Muslim women have a stronger voice so that people can listen to that and understand that it's not just as they think about it, they, there's an alternative.  
 PA I'm going to give you an example. There's a teacher at the university, it's her first week in Saudi Arabia. She never travelled to Middle East and she had a really, really crazy idea about Saudi Arabia. Yes, she teaches English at, ah, level two and my friend, ah, she told me that the teacher asked them, are you going to finish school, like, are you going to finish, ah, university? And my friends say, yes. She said, really? So Saudi women do study? She thought that we only come to the university to study English and that's it and we go home.  
 RE So her perception of Saudi women is that they're literally just...  
 PA Just were not allowed to, ah, to study, not allowed...  
 RE We can't study, we're not allowed to study, that we just...  
 PA We're not allowed to work...get married.  
 PA Yes. That's her idea. And she said, are you going to finish university? All of my friends say, yes. She was so surprised, yes, and then she said, and the... that was her first week and by the end of the semester they made, ah, a little party for her and she cried actually because she was so...  
 \_00:40:35\_  
 RE She was so...  
 PA Yes, emotional.  
 RE ... emotional about it, so touched.  
 PA And they played music, she said, you guys have music? You do listen to music? They said, yes, and we dance too. She said, unbelievable.  
 RE Wow!  
 PA Yes, she had a really, really bad idea about Saudi Arabian women, it was so funny.  
 \_00:40:55\_  
 RE Totally.

PA Yes, and I can't blame her actually because she's never been to Middle East...

RE Also maybe she's been told what people think about...

PA Yes, and now the fact that the girls speak English, they correct her, they corrected her ideas...

RE Her ideas.

PA That's the benefit.

RE And she goes back to America or wherever she's come from with...

PA Exactly, and she can share. That they're not like that. They're changing the stereotypes about women. Because I remember there was a story, there was a woman that was an English teacher and she'd been here a few years and she said, they're not going to finish university, they're all going to be married, you know, by year two of university. And I thought, wow, this is... it's a really sad perception of a teacher to have, as an instructor. So what's the point, basically? Why are they teaching? We do finish university. We have...

\_00:41:53\_

RE I think a lot of people have misconceptions about this.

PA Yes, yes maybe there is...

RE That it's just a filler between now and before you get married.

PA Maybe she had this idea because she saw one or two do that, Saudi girls. I'm not going to lie and tell you that we are perfect, no. There is still like... yes, but I'm not going to speak about that because it's a really sad idea. But when you see one or two do that, that doesn't mean the whole, ah...

RE The whole lot do it.

PA Yes. We do finish school, we do... we do, ah, work. We do have careers and jobs and not just our life turn about, um...

RE Revolves around just family or having kids.

PA Yes, no it's not. We do have more ideas and thoughts and passion.

\_00:42:44\_

RE Yes, and hobbies and interests.

PA Yes, exactly.

RE And you're on practically every social platform that they can imagine, these teachers don't realise.

PA Yes. I can tell you a billion stories about really successful Saudi women who've done, like...

RE Amazing things in business, in lots of different sectors as well, yes.

PA Yes. And there is, ah, um, um, a Saudi doctor, her name is Haula [?]. She had, ah, she won, I don't remember what she won actually but she made a research about

genetics and it was really, really good. It was the first of its kind.

RE Wow. So she got a, an international recognition for what she did on her...

PA Yes, exactly. And she's not the first. I can tell you a billion stories about the Saudis.

RE These amazing Saudi women.

PA Yes.

RE And maybe there's just this gap between how the west sees and they haven't caught up with the real...

\_00:43:43\_

PA Yes, and there's nothing we can do about it except we can speak and tell them, yes, and communicate and that's what English do.

RE Thank you. Most wonderful, wonderful explanation, I'm very, very grateful.

PA Thank you.

RE So that's the end of our little, um, interview. Do you have anything else to add or...?

PA No, except I thank you for this amazing research and I feel it's... you're going to change a lot with this research. I really like the questions, I really did.

RE Thank you.

\_00:44:17\_

PA You're welcome.

RE Thank you, I'm really grateful that you participated and I'm really, I am touched as well to know that this is an area of interest for you as well and that you are happy to talk about it.

PA Yes, I was really, really happy.

RE Thank you.

## Appendix 18 –Cohort 2b: Narrative Frame Complete

STAGE 1: Your story: Part 1
<p><i>Narrative Inquiry is written like a story, including the sentence prompts to keep some uniformity with other participant responses. You can include as much of your own expression in between sentence prompts, if the prompts do not apply to you, you may delete them. You can be descriptive in the storytelling and especially expressive in the multimodal section by adding other media to your story. Everything will be kept anonymous.</i></p>
<p><b>Before</b></p> <p>I am [REDACTED] 22 years old. I am from Saudi Arabia - Riyadh. I have been an English learner for 10 years and I have learnt English at school. English class was my favorite at that time and I was so excited to learn more about it. I have travelled outside Saudi Arabia in different European countries such as, Paris, Italy, Geneva (Switzerland) London, and Germany. The first time I went to Paris and I was not master the Language very well. However, with time and travelling with my family I tried to talk with people who speak the same langue and apply what I have studied at school before. I went to school in Saudi Arabia from 2008 to 2017, in school I studied English because my school requires the student to speak and understand the English language and that because of most of the subject that they teach are in English. In addition, my parents were also insistent to learn it as they know it is the most international language in the world. They have been the biggest influence on me as I have grown up. They also have distributed their attributes to me, creating a dynamic woman of passion and motivation.</p> <p>The first stage was in the years of my childhood, it started with movies, songs, and toys. I hear the English language; however, I do not understand what I am hearing. Nevertheless, that did not bother me, as I was too young to be intrigued. Yet, the weird different sounds of the letters appealed to me. Whenever we had a family movie night, I would notice everyone is so engaged with what is happening on the screen. Moreover, I was intrigued by how much they are so into it, when it is incomprehensible and different from our language (to me, in my view). Thus, as a child, I started to ask so many questions, what are they saying? What is it about? Why are you laughing? Back then, I had to spell the word to be able to read it. The subtitles would not stay that long on the screen for me to read, and I wanted to be as engaged in it as they are because they seemed to be having fun and I was bored. My father used to buy me a lot of toys and the most toy that caught my full attention hence, I kept playing with was the kids' language teaching telephone. I started to memorize very simple words whilst I had no idea what they meant. I also sang along until I memorized the songs. Furthermore, Whenever I would be playing on the PlayStation, I couldn't get the "missions" done because I couldn't read, so each time I face an obstacle, I call out my older brother to read for me, and as a teenager he was impatient. Hence, that upset me and I just wanted to know what they know, so I would rely on myself and I would not have to call for them to translate each time. I wanted to understand so badly. In addition, I was a very hyperactive kid and my teenage brothers did not have a lot of patience, therefore, they would communicate in English to avoid me and it would annoy me. What are they saying? I asked myself. I picked up three words from the toy that I used to play with (Mall – Yes – No) and immediately I knew what it was about, and I shouted in Arabic, you two are going to the mall? I want to go too! they had a positively surprised look on their faces and they laughed. In result of that, I wanted to know more to get more reactions like this. I remember as a courtesy I used to arrange their books, and I stumbled upon their English notebooks. Here they are the English letters! I started to draw them out on an external piece of paper. Even though I did not know how to sound all of them out I felt proud and I enjoyed it because I felt like I am improving. My older brother noticed my scattered papers and decided to teach me, he sounded them out, taught me the alphabets and I remember I enjoyed it so much.</p> <p>The second stage was in school, I was always absent as I had a hard time leaving my mother in elementary school. I remember one day the English teacher took me aside to test me, she showed me the alphabets and she kept asking me to read them out loud, I only read some of them because I forgot the rest. Moreover, she dismissed me. Even though I had difficulty with it, she did not make any efforts to teach me privately or to be somewhat considerate to the individual differences among the students. In middle school, I used to read a lot of books in which the language of it was very easy, and I used to try really hard and never stopped even though it was frustrating sometimes, but I knew that every hard work eventually pays off as my parents used to tell me. Furthermore, I watched</p>



'a', I knew when to use 'an' and when to use 'a', but I could not give a grammatical explanation. I would always say to the person asking me. It sounds right and this sounds wrong. My Languages and translation major taught me how to illustrate and provide my answers' with examples. In conclusion, I will never stop learning and my passion will never cease to grow.

### **During**

At school I had so many Western English teachers maybe 6 to 7 teachers in different stages or phases from school to university. When I was little I was so excited to learn English because I want to be bilingual and I know that this language will help me in my future and professional life. I thought English was a bit difficult because the first time I learned it when I was 12 years old and I remember I faced some difficulties in pronouncing some words and writing them as well. Now I think English is quite easy because I have studied the language for 11 years and have an experience with it. My parents do not speak English because at their time there were no opportunities for them and it was not common at Saudi Arabia or at their school to learn the language. My mother thinks English is very important Language and whoever master it is very genius because she thinks it is hard to learn it. My father thinks English easy but need a huge effort to do so because it is hard to learn a native language other than your mother tongue. My siblings are speaking the language fluently because they learned it at school as I did and they apply what they studied when we travel outside Saudi Arabia. A friend I know went to Canada to learn the language and to know the culture as well, another reason because his mother lived there for 20 years and she recommends her to travel and learn there. Before I learnt English with a Western teacher, I thought Western women are very polite, know very well their jobs, what to do what to do and what no to do, respect every culture and religion. Many family members thought Western teachers are very polite, nice people, they love their family and respect each other. I thought that learning English in this university setting would be hard and difficult, especially that academic teaching requires a formal sitting in addition to the language that they using in teaching the students. However, I found it easy only to smart students who study day by day and managing their time. Saudi Arabia is a Muslim country. The world thinks that Saudi Arabia is terrorism country that help terrorist to spread conflicts and wars around the world which is obviously incorrect. Those who said that are the ones who have never been to Saudi Arabia or other Muslim countries or listening to some rumors and hoaxes that what Western media have said about Saudi Arabia but not always I think. The Western media says Saudi women are very obligated and follow precisely what their government want them to do for example, the rules that they sit for the country "Women are not driving". I was a student in [REDACTED] I want to learn more about this language at this university because at that time it was new and it has new colleges in each building. As an English Language learner at university, I started at language level 4. I had classes with about 24 students, maximum, and I studied English for eight hours a week. I found learning English with my western teachers to be more beneficial, help me more to understand the words and terms, they let me know more about their cultures as well as some tips and benefits to their professional lifestyle. I found learning with the university English material to be also beneficial because it is improved my English language and skills as well by doing some assignments and presents some PowerPoint projects in English language. With a western teacher I have to come to her classes on time or ten minutes before the class in order to take your attendance, I have to be polite as she do to us, help her whatever she wants in anytime because all the ones they taught were helper and nice. I really like learning English at university because it develops my language vocabulary, skills and performances. I really like the learning experience with a Western teacher because she helps me a lot to improve my skills, language, performances and how to apply them in the future time. I had a Western teacher from Australia she was 55 years old. She was so passion, faithful to her job, kind, love helping others, and she was explaining everything in a simple way. She lived in Japan and Cambodia in many years before coming to KSA her purpose is to learn Japanese language and Cambodia and their culture. My western teacher talks a lot about her culture because we asked her to tell us more about them as she is our first Western teacher and I like some of them because other things are not related or not familiar to our culture and religion for instance, in Western countries it is okay to girl to have a boyfriend while here in our country we are not allowed because of our religion and culture. This situation taught me so much because it makes me accept other cultures. My teacher thought Saudi Arabia was a country of terrorism source and women are not allowed to do what they want just to cook for her husband and children. My teacher thought living in Saudi Arabia will be a dangerous place and a very challenge step. From what I could tell, my teacher enjoyed her experience in Saudi Arabia and she tell us that as she taught many Saudi cultures, words and attitudes, famous dishes like *Kabsah* and *Jaresh* and many other dishes.

a lot of youtubers, movies, tv shows, in which the subtitles helped a lot. I started to write in English, rather than Arabic based on the word sound, not the spelling. My classmates used to always ask me to translate words for them. I remember one of them asked me about the word, "bizarre" and I remembered the meaning from a teen tv show I watched. I was like the class's dictionary and I liked that a lot in the aspect of being helpful. It encouraged me to learn even more. By the time I reached high school, I had enough knowledge to get an A+. I remember I was the only enthusiastic student amongst the class. I loved participating; I wanted to speak in English, as it was an opportunity for me to practice what appears to be my passion. It was in high school when I discovered I had a strong passion towards languages. Languages fascinated me! We have the same physical attributes, the same tongue, the same bodily functions, yet we speak different languages, not to mention being the mediator between two people or more to enable them to understand and communicate with each other was just purely beautiful. I knew what path I wanted to take and progress in at the time. That is why I chose the faculty of Languages and translation, and I have recently graduated, but I will never stop learning, and I will always be a student. I shall learn as many languages as I can in the future, as my passion is very self-driven!

The third stage was in my teenage years, which is when it all started. The crazy interest, the eagerness to learn, to speak and understand. I started to watch so many movies to the point I would put up a schedule of the airing times, I would listen very intently, read the subtitles, and write down the words and their meaning if I write a word and the subtitle changes. I would leave it, move on, and come back to it later after the movie ends and go online to search for the word meaning. Additionally, when the subtitle comes up I used to quickly interpret it before the speaker says the line, which helped me with my word choices, provided me with synonyms, and adjusted my pronunciation. I used to listen to a lot of songs. I would memorize the songs and train myself until I am able to sing along. After that, I moved to rap songs to teach me how to speak faster and not stutter. I was so engaged to the American TV shows, movies, and music to the point that I picked up the accents. I would download movies on my computer so I get the privilege of going back, forth, pausing, and replaying whenever I needed to. I came to notice that the American accents come out in two major ways, one from the tip of the tongue. Two, from the back of the throat. I mastered that and I was able to pull off the accent. I started to understand their type of humor, general characteristics, and cultural aspects. I reached a point where I wanted to engage with foreigners to test my ability and speed of comprehension, receiving, and speaking. Therefore, I started going online to find people to talk to or chat with. It started with chatting and texting, and I learned from that, how to spell, and write words and the sentence structure, then lastly I noticed the grammar. I used to translate a lot of the chats content to understand, then reply with poor grammar. However, they understood me. After a period of time of communicating and translating, I started to notice the frequency of the grammatical structure of the sentences. Whenever the conversation was about the present, past, or future. In addition, I used to ask that group of people to always correct me with illustrations. Furthermore, I wanted to verbally communicate, and test what I have acquired, I felt ready after a period of time, in which I was comfortable with writing and I saw that I have improved because the conversations became smoother. Therefore, I started to go on online games on the PlayStation. That is where I met an all-girls clan, in which 90% of them were Americans, and a few were British. However, it was required by the clan leader to use a microphone to be able to communicate during the game. That was such an advantage for me. I have told them that English was not my first language, and they were nice about it. Yes, there were times on which they laughed really hard at my mistakes. Nevertheless, it did not bother me. I told them that if I say something wrong, I would appreciate it if they corrected me and with an explanation if possible. Sometimes, I would tell them to send the explanation to me in a message with examples, so it would be as a reference for me whenever I got confused. As a result of all of that, engaging with the first language acquisition highly improved me (English native speakers) It was more of a language practice for me than gaming, but with the excitement of playing you become more recipient as it was a fun stress-free environment. In addition, through playing and voice chatting, I learned their cultural related phraseology, jokes, embedded meanings, intonation and their meanings. It was like a whole other personality when I spoke English. As it would be if I spoke Korean or Japanese.

The fourth and last stage was college and adulthood, College; my major really did break things down for me in regard to accurate grammar, formal and informal speech, listening and speaking, semantics, linguistics, simultaneous and consecutive interpretation, reading and so on. I had no problems with L&S nor with reading. By the time I started, I knew how to speak, write, and spell. I also had a previous knowledge about grammar from my own ways of practices as mentioned before. However, if someone would ask me why would I say this and not that? I would not know how to completely illustrate, but I knew that was the right answer. An example of this are the articles 'an' and



**After**

I remember that each teacher who taught me before whether at school or at university ask me to talk about ourselves in order to get know each other and what our goals in this life. What I learnt from my English teacher is to be patience and faithful. I finished my English course in 29 – 8 – 2013 because I took many courses plus the one I had at school and university and I felt like it is enough and I have to apply what I learned. I learned English for 3 years with the Western teachers. Now I feel that I have the capacity of speaking English fluently with anyone in everywhere whether with American or Canadian people at university or at Hospitals. I feel happy and proud about myself and what I have done until now. My learning experience in KSA interesting as my country provide this kind of learning facilities to us and we have to be proud to such a thing like that. If I could give advice to a female Western women coming to teach here in Saudi Arabia, I would say teaching in a country other than your country considered as a unique experience if we did not take other cultures into consideration and it is a good opportunity to get know each other's better.

**Your thoughts: Part 2**

Globalization is a process to interact with other people, companies and governments in order to impose their ideas and polices around the world. Globalization has changed people's mind, especially Muslims of youth and Saudi women who like this kind of process that fit with their mind and attitudes. To conclude what I said briefly, it is really beneficial years as a translator student. Also it develops my skills through the tasks they gave us as well as my performance in real life that help me to apply what I have learned throughout the semesters and years. In life we shall not cease from learning new things and explorations and we have to improve ourselves always for the better.